

# THE AMERICAN **Legion**

SEPTEMBER 2001

*The magazine for a strong America*

## A SALUTE TO AMERICA'S **HEROES**



*The American GI:*  
**Unique Among Heroes**

*Women Who Served:*  
**Our Sister Soldiers**

*POW/MIA:*  
**Forgotten Warriors**

*Peacekeeping Missions:*  
**War of the Future?**

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# THE AMERICAN Legion

For God and Country

SEPTEMBER 2001  
Vol. 151, No. 3

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**COVER:** Men of the 1st Cavalry Division, 1st Battalion, 77th Artillery watch as their comrades disembark from the troop transport USNS *General Simon Buckner* at Qui Nhon, Vietnam. *National Archives*





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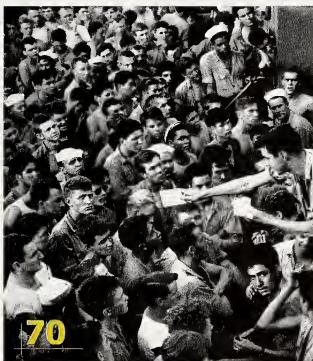
His "Dear Abby" plea for war letters gave Andrew Carroll an appreciation for veterans' causes. *By Jeff Stoffer*

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The **American Legion Magazine**, a leader among national general-interest publications, is published monthly by The American Legion for its 2.7 million members. These wartime veterans, working through 15,000 community-level Posts, dedicate themselves to God and Country and traditional American values, strong national security, adequate and compassionate care for veterans, their widows and orphans, community service, and the wholesome development of our nation's youth.





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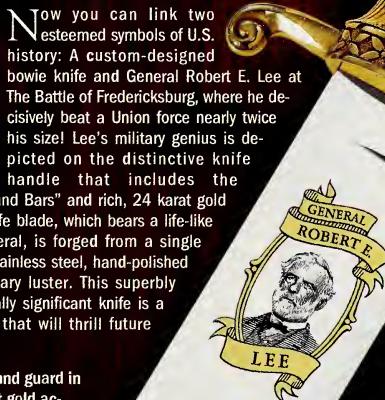
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## Desecration a hate crime

It has become newly fashionable in some states to pass laws prohibiting "hate crimes." I am confident that we Legionnaires, and many other citizens, consider flag desecration a hate crime of the highest order. Isn't there a strategy whereby desecrators could be prosecuted under these laws?

—Dave Matson Jr., Palos Verdes, Calif.

## Defending the Scouts

After reading in your magazine that The American Legion supports the Boy Scouts of America and their stand on homosexuality ("The Fight for Moral Rights," July), I am even prouder of being a member of this organization. Too often the media takes the view that it is wrong or discriminatory of the BSA to uphold its rights to be a moral organization as set forth in the Scout Oath and Scout Laws.

Thank you so much for supporting the Boy Scouts of America.

—Howard R. Hartzell Jr., Mifflinburg, Pa.



## Gay agenda thwarted

Every American citizen with any degree of morality worth mentioning should — no, *must* — support the Boy Scouts in their continuing battle over the inclusion of homosexuals, especially in leadership positions.

The homosexual community is trying very hard to push their agenda, their philosophy, and their lifestyle down our throats. Any attempt to contend with their program is met with loud cries of being "unkind," "unloving," "intolerant," etc. The list of "crimes" they say we commit against them seems endless. We need to continue to resist this very disruptive program.

—David A. Sholes, Albany, Ky.

## In support of gays

The article "The Fight for Moral Rights" praises the Boy Scouts of America for taking the position that gay men are immoral, characterized by a "perverse vision of right and wrong," thereby carelessly

and egregiously melding homosexuality and pedophilia.

This article is abusive to the thousands of gay service personnel who have served with honor, and it is insulting to all people intelligent enough to discern the difference between sexual orientation and an inclination toward pedophilia.

I hope The American Legion is not so desperate for decent causes as to support the Scouts' misrepresentation and denigration of non-heterosexual people. I am one ex-Boy Scout, veteran and Legionnaire who stands against such unfair and un-American thinking.

—Donn B. Murphy, Arlington, Va.

## The risk of privatization

Dan Mitchell's article on Social Security (July) is among the silliest I have read in a long time. To compare what has happened in Chile with what may happen in the United States if we privatized Social Security is about as disingenuous as one can get.

There are some differences in the two countries that make such a comparison preposterous. Just stop and think a moment about what Mitchell's proposed action would mean in terms of "unintended consequences." There will be salesmen pounding on every door in this nation asking people to invest in their stocks.

Imagine what else would happen. These proponents never tell you what we will do for those investors

who lose money — and surely there will be some — when they have to retire or are injured and unable to work. Will the "wise investors" somehow have to provide for them?

—Ray Peck, Havre, Mont.

## Investing in our future

The article "Saving Social Security" brought to mind economist John Maynard Keynes' observation that the state could permanently lower interest rates by directly investing in capital markets.

Keynes felt that government monetary policy (variations in interest rates and the supply of money) and fiscal policy (tax cuts and increments to public spending) could not permanently tame the business cycle. In view of Keynes' observation, perhaps investing Social Security taxes would not only provide additional income for workers' retirement but also would help in damping the business cycle's ups and downs.

—Al A. Walsh, Del Rio, Texas

## Missed the mark

It is unfortunate that Dan Mitchell is unaware of the full benefits of the present Social Security program. Not only are retirement benefits provided, but also benefits for workers who become disabled and widows and widowers who have minor children, as well as their minor children. If these payments are factored in, his conclusions are erroneous.

—James R. Jungrath, Jamestown, N.D.

## Story stirs emotion

I would like to congratulate you for publishing the article "The Children's Story" (July). I believe the author accurately describes the way it used to be in our country but no longer is. Our forefathers founded this great country on God and the Bible. Why don't we continue that? It irks me when I see someone destroying our flag.

It was a great story and put tears in my eyes.

—Tony Albanese, Lakeside, Calif.

## Freedom not mere words

Thanks for printing James Clavell's "The Children's Story." I saw the TV version of the story as well. My hope is that others,

## WE WANT YOUR OPINIONS

*The American Legion Magazine* welcomes letters concerning articles that appear in the publication. Be sure to include your hometown and a daytime phone number for verification. All letters are subject to editing. Send your opinions to:

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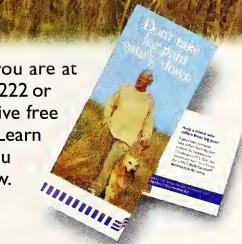
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through the story, would realize how fragile our freedoms are and how important early childhood education is. Perhaps we might all take steps to make our freedoms, the Pledge of Allegiance and our flag more than mere words and symbols, but well-understood foundations for the flourishing of liberty.

— Robert Green, Covington, Ga.

## Band together for benefits

Concurrent receipt is a major issue for us retired veterans who have had our retirement pay reduced by the amount of our service-connected disability compensation. The military is the only branch of the federal government that has experienced this reduction. It isn't federal employees or members of Congress. It's unreasonable when the wealthy receive tax breaks in the billions while veterans who sacrificed 20 years of their lives serving their country, and becoming disabled in the process, can't collect the benefits they deserve. All veterans' organizations should band together in support of HR 303 and S170.

— Ed Davis, Big Pine Key, Fla.

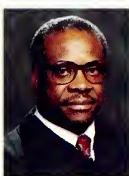
## Thomas right on target

Justice Clarence Thomas ("Courage v. Civility," July) hit the proverbial nail on the head. Honor, courage and commitment — values our armed forces profess are central to personal and professional integrity — are meaningless slogans when they are not manifested in our daily lives.

The evil that threatens our Constitution and our society itself is the fear to voice a dissenting opinion.

Let us all remember that

ours is a government not of the politicians or the wealthy and special-interest lobbyists; it is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is not merely our right to vote which makes us citizens of this great nation. It is our responsibility to actively participate in shaping the nation's future. Thomas reminds us and, appropriately, reprimands



us to stand up, speak out and shun the selfish comfort of allowing others to decide our fate.

— Michael W. Riley, Tampa, Fla.

## Thomas unchallenged

I've often wondered where the modern John Lockes or Thomas Paines are. Then I read with great pleasure the excerpt of "Courage v. Civility" by Clarence Thomas. His argument for open debate as the cornerstones of freedom cannot be challenged. Thomas clearly pointed out the brutal techniques of intimidation and denunciation used to stifle and discourage the discourse of ideas. The essence of "Courage v. Civility" truly validates Justice Clarence Thomas as a leader and free thinker.

— Thomas Deutsche, Hampton, Ga.

## Republican agenda

The July 2001 issue must have been written by the Republican National Committee. Come on. Give us a little independent thought.

— Larry J. Kluth, Apache Junction, Ariz.

## Kudos for July issue

Your July 2001 issue is excellent! "The Fight for Moral Rights" in support of the Boy Scouts of America's position denying homosexuals the privilege of serving as Scoutmasters was a convincing argument for the traditional moral standards of Scouting. As an 80-year-old Eagle Scout and a veteran of World War II, I completely agree with your position that sexual perversion has no place in Scouting and that the Supreme Court decision was fully justified.

And your article "Courage v. Civility" by Clarence Thomas was a revealing explanation of our society's false belief that "civility" must take the place of truth in public discourse. In an attempt to be nonjudgmental, many Americans deny the truth and embrace that which is false. Justice Thomas clearly explained that basic weakness in modern thought.

— L.E. Flanagan, Fort Worth, Texas

## Not the big issue

In reference to the responses made by Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Rep. Joel Hefley, R-Colo., ("Big Issues," July), it seems all one thinks about is saving money in the process of base closure and realign-

ment. Not once have I heard anyone mention the impact on military personnel and their families. Recruiting is bad enough now. What will it be like if more people are moved?

— W.A. Wright, Myrtle Beach, S.C.

## State of readiness

The article "Preventing Armageddon" (July) was extremely timely. Missile defense is an idea we have placed on the back burner for too long.

It's been more than 18 years since President Reagan first proposed the idea. The threat from rogue nations continues to increase, and we continue to talk about the destabilizing effect on the Russians. If the Russians see it as a threat to them, that's their problem. Our need is to defend America, not worry about what other nations think.

— Carlos R. Garcia, Brandon, Fla.



## Defense more complex

I have read and heard the pros and cons of the anti-missile defense system. It is true that it will be a challenge for scientists and engineers to design, develop and implement such an extraordinary system. But in the long run, it will become useless and obsolete. Why? Because in this age of cybernetics, it would be cheaper to locate satellites armed with nuclear warheads above all major cities than to use ballistic missiles.

— Pragmatico Rivera, Naranjito, Puerto Rico

## VA must reverse delays

In VA Secretary Anthony Principi's interview ("Cutting Backlog Principi's Top Priority," June), he said this year's processing of claims is expected to increase from 202 days to 273 days next year. He also said these delays are unacceptable. I agree. Many veterans with disabilities — I myself am 90-percent disabled — wait much longer than 273 days. When is something going to be done to help us veterans get the full benefits we deserve?

— Richard L. Mileham, Columbus, Ga.

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# Veterans' common bond



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*No other experience quite compares to the life-and-death stakes of wartime service. It instills a barometer of courage in your soul.*



**B**ack when the art of visiting wasn't completely lost, people around the rural crossroads town of Meadow, N.C., got to know their neighbors pretty well. So it struck me on Sept. 7, 1955 – the day after I came home from the service – that something had distinctly changed about Theodore Quiggle. Physically, he looked like the same hard-working, good-hearted farmer I'd known all my life, when he rolled up to our place to welcome me home. Then it dawned on me that a change had indeed occurred. We were both now veterans.

Nearly four decades separated his World War I Army experience from my own tour in Korea, but the span of time between our deployments did not matter. We both endured the rigors of basic training. We both felt the acute tension of performing our duty in the crosshairs of enemy fire. Upon coming home, we both appreciated beyond description the feeling of familiar soil beneath our feet, knowing thousands of others did not come home at all.

Quiggle dropped by not just to shake my hand that day. He came to ask me to join The American Legion. Without hesitating, I did.

He knew instinctively what it would take me years to fully understand. He knew that the common bond of military service lasts far beyond the uniformed years.

No other experience quite compares to the life-and-death stakes of wartime service. It instills a barometer of courage in your soul. Your life depends on your buddy. Your buddy's life depends on you. And that's heady business for a teen-ager fresh out of high school who has just a few weeks of basic training to become an adult and learn how to save lives or take them with equal aptitude. You learn to respond affirmatively to orders that could kill you and – having accomplished that – you might be deemed capable of giving such orders yourself. As for death, we would like to believe that soldiers fight to the end for their nation's interests, but in reality they die fighting for each other. Few other young adults can claim a real understanding of such consequences. The military experience is profound that way.

**The First Step.** The U.S. military prides itself on bringing out human potential. Sometimes degrading, always challenging, and typically populated by drill sergeants and instructors who were born to scream, basic training has not lost much of its essence over the years.

"Boot camp is the closest thing to a birth experience grown men will ever go through," Sen. Zell Miller, D-Ga., writes of his Marine Corps experience. "The main difference is the gestation period is compressed into three instead of nine months."

The most intricate details of basic training create lifetime memories. I will never forget arriving at Lackland Air Force Base in 1951 and the drill sergeant who welcomed us to dinner with a blast of language best kept out of print. As we stepped out into the dusty Texas heat, we told him we had just finished our dinner on the train and were not really hungry.

"Well, you're eating again!" he roared. Lesson No. 1: Do not debate the drill sergeant.

Uniforms, blankets, haircuts and marches that seemed to last forever drew us together. Because of the war in Korea, everything was sped up. We slept in tents with no floors and had some kind of drill or another in the middle of every night.

We came from all corners of the nation – all races, cultures, faiths and tax brackets – to be molded into a unit of Americans who stood together for the same principles. We were trained to understand that it takes every bit of our brains, bodies, instincts and guts to realize potential others may not even know they possess. We also were trained to understand that we absolutely needed each other.

**The Fast Track.** Long learning curves are not practical during wartime. Those who show the ability are quickly given the opportunity to ascend, regardless of age, based on their performance.

That element of the common bond was not lost on Thomas E. Ricks, a Pentagon reporter who covered U.S. action in Somalia for *The Wall Street Journal* during Operation Restore Hope. In his book "Making the Corps," Ricks writes: "As we walked in single file, with red and green tracer fire arcing across the black sky over the city, I realized that I had placed my life in the hands of the young corporal leading the patrol, a 22-year-old Marine. In my office back in Washington, we wouldn't let a 22-year-old run the copying machine without adult supervision. Here, after just two days on the ground in Africa, the corporal was leading his squad into unknown territory with a confidence that was contagious."

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of accelerated maturity attainable in the U.S. service. At 26, he commanded a crew of 24 aboard a big 1950s-era EP-3E Navy surveillance plane, that collided mid-air with a Chinese fighter jet. After the plane plummeted more than 5,000 feet, Osborn wrestled it back into control, landing safely without the benefit of wing flaps or functioning instruments. "No other course of action would have ensured all 24 crew members (would survive)," Rear Adm. Michael Holmes, commander of the Navy's Pacific patrol and reconnaissance force, said afterward.

After 11 days of interrogation and detainment on the island of Hainan, the crew was finally released and allowed to return home. Flags waved, marching bands played and media swarmed to welcome them at Whidbey Island Naval Air Station in Washington.

In the midst of all the fanfare, Osborn calmly explained to the media that he just wanted to get back in the air and return to duty.

**Uncommon Experiences.** When you hear the phrase "hit the ground running," remember it did not originate in a corporate board room. It came from people like Cpl. Arthur L. St. Onge of Montgomery, Vt.

On his first day in Korea, St. Onge was shipped beyond the 38th Parallel to a temporary headquarters for the 17th Infantry. "About 20 tents were set up when we arrived," he said. "We were told not to unpack. Company assignments were coming."

About two hours later, while crossing the road to the chow line, a round from the north landed about 200 feet from the tents. "The cooks said they'd been getting closer every time," St. Onge explained. "I told my friends I met that day that no way was I going in those tents. I convinced two of the friends and three other soldiers from Puerto Rico to stay back, too."

The six men settled into a ditch along the road. That night, a round slammed into the center of the tents. Six soldiers were killed in the explosion. Seventeen were wounded. "Amid the screaming and hollering,



**Illustrating the common bond of the military experience, World War I Legionnaires support their World War II sons by buying war bonds.** American Legion Library.

I ran across the road to the service company area and got two ambulances," St. Onge said. "That night, I helped remove the wounded, some of whom were taken to the hospital ship called Hope. We spent the rest of the night in the ditch."

The next morning, after he found his duffel bag destroyed and his rifle mangled, St. Onge was assigned to Pork Chop Hill. On foreign soil less than 24 hours, the new soldier had already helped save six lives including his own, witnessed 23 casualties and was rewarded with a broken weapon and a ticket to one of the most hellish places in the Korean War.

You just do it. An inner fortitude that goes beyond training inexplicably takes over. There are thousands and thousands of examples like that of Army Chaplain Maj. Charles Watters, who could not be restrained from helping the wounded and giving last rites to the dying during a bloody Vietnam War battle in July 1967. Unarmed, the 40-year-old chaplain from Jersey City, N.J., rushed the front lines to deliver water, food and bandages. He encountered a wounded paratrooper helplessly in shock. Watters carried the man from the front of the assault line to safety. From soldier to soldier he traversed until, inevitably, he himself was killed.

For many, the meaning of war was not clear until American soil was in sight. W.B. Stanford of Hartselle, Ala., once wrote that his most vivid World War II memory was sailing into San Francisco Bay. "I could see a big sign on the ground, made out of rock and painted, saying 'Welcome Home.' In a few minutes we were docking and a band on the dock was playing 'The Battle Hymn of the Republic.' I never felt more American."

The common bond is a timeless connection that's hard to define but easy to recognize. In an 83-year-old

photograph, you might find it in the eyes of a farm boy standing at attention, saluting his mother, before shipping out to the Argonne Forest. The same confident focus appears today on the face of a suburban-raised Air Force pilot enforcing U.N. sanctions over Iraq. That focus is etched in the portraits of young men and women who have proudly served America around the world, throughout the century, in every branch.

Technology, communications and the world's political composition have changed in staggering ways during the past century, but the American GI remains a heroic figure of honor, dignity and courage. This is especially so in the eyes of the oppressed, the hungry and the people of the world who can't defend themselves against tyranny and terrorism. To them, the American GI is an icon of hope.

**After the Uniform.** Last fall, I had the pleasure of joining my fellow Legionnaires for a Reconnect Program visit at Fort Sill, Okla.

In the faces of focused young soldiers, we saw that look. They demonstrated some of the new weapons and showed us that uncomfortable barracks, uncompromising drill sergeants and unconditional camaraderie haven't changed a bit in the new millennium. Basic training still brings out the potential in a young person.

Unfortunately, very few of the young soldiers we met realized that their active-duty status automatically qualifies them for American Legion membership. In a way, that doesn't surprise me. Twenty-two years old and fresh out of the Korean War, I myself was not at first certain of my eligibility. As a teen-ager, I thought The American Legion was a community hall where my neighbors got together for special occasions.

I have to thank Theodore Quigley for showing me otherwise, for making it clear that The American Legion is much more than that. It's a lifelong celebration of a permanent memory, a memory that joins us in a common bond that defines who we are.



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# GI Joe: *Person of the 20th Century*



A Marine heads back to a Coast Guard assault transport after two days and nights of fighting on the beach of Eniwetok in the Marshall Islands in February 1944.  
National Archives

*A salute to our fighting men and women*

BY STEPHEN E. AMBROSE

THE question of who to name as the 20th century's most important person has been a constant source of conversation and even heated debate. Most Americans nominate Franklin D. Roosevelt, some Winston S. Churchill. Both are clearly worthy. For others, the nominee is another man who led us in war and peace: Dwight D. Eisenhower. Nominees for the century's worst person include Hitler, Stalin and Mao. These men stand tall or short because of the supreme importance of conflict and politics in the 20th century.

Among those who should be considered beyond those criteria are Henry Ford, who put the world on wheels; John D. Rockefeller; Bill Gates; Margaret Sanger; Betty Friedan; Rosa Parks; Martin Luther King Jr.; Crick and Watson; and Albert Einstein.

But my own nominee, the one who is the obvious winner the

moment you think about it, is GI Joe — the soldier, the sailor, the airman, the Marine and the Coast Guardsman of the 20th century. He was called "dough boy" during World War I when he stopped the Kaiser from taking control of Europe. Woodrow Wilson and Black Jack Pershing were his leaders. Harry S. Truman was a dough boy and so was Eisenhower, along with George Patton and Alvin York.

He was called "GI Joe" during World War II, when his leaders were Franklin D. Roosevelt, George C. Marshall, Omar Bradley, Douglas MacArthur, Patton and Eisenhower. Audie Murphy was the best-known GI Joe, but he was one of millions. This armed everyman was unique among soldiers of this or any other time — unique not only for his bravery, which he, without question, had in abundance, but also for his selflessness, his reverence for democracy, and his compas-



**Above:** Troops of the 28th Infantry Division march down the Champs Elysees, Paris, in the 1945 victory parade. *National Archives*  
**Left:** U.S. Army Pvt. Gaylord Johnson patrols an area near the Iraqi border while atop a Humvee vehicle in northern Kuwait in January 2001. Rather than build its own army, Kuwait finances a rotating force of 5,000 American and British troops. *AP*

sion for and generosity toward fellow human beings not fortunate enough to know firsthand the prosperity of the United States.

The American GI stopped Hitler, Mussolini and Tojo from burning the world down. From 1950 to 1953, GI Joe kept the communists out of South Korea. His leaders at that time were MacArthur, Matt Ridgeway and Truman. Throughout the half-century from 1945 onward, he stopped Stalin and his successors and won the Cold War in one of the greatest feats of arms ever. GI Joe won that war without having to fight a final, apocalyptic battle, which was exactly the way he preferred to do it. Avoiding a definitive confrontation with the communist bloc produced no end

of heartache in places like Vietnam, but he did the job he was asked to do. His leaders in the Cold War were Truman, Eisenhower, Jack Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan and George H. Bush.

The end of the Cold War lowered the stakes somewhat, but his work continued. In Kuwait, the GI held back Saddam Hussein's army with President George H. Bush and Gens. Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf as his leaders. In Kosovo, under President Clinton and with help from other NATO troops, he did the same with the Serbian army.

**The Worst Year.** Millions of people today owe their freedom to GI Joe. People in Europe, Asia and

the Middle East need to say thanks every day to the American servicemen and women and their allies for the sacrifices they made to ensure the triumph of freedom and democracy. The alternative these people faced – the long black night the 20th century could have become – was never clearer than in the year of 1945.

True, it was the year World War II ended, and as such it is remembered fondly by Americans. But it was also the worst year in the world's history. More people were killed and more buildings were destroyed in 1945 than in any other year. In the last few months of the war, 1 million people died a week – not just from weapons, but also from privation on an unprecedented scale.

Other horrors reigned as well. In 1945, in many parts of the world, the sight of a 12-man squad of teen-age soldiers, heavily armed and in uniform, brought terror to civilian hearts. The fears

**Right:** A jubilant American soldier hugs a motherly English woman during the celebration at Piccadilly Circus following the announcement of Germany's unconditional surrender in May 1945. *National Archives*

**Far right:** It doesn't seem to matter where war carried GI Joe. His sense of humor and yearning for home is reflected in a signpost at a crossroads in Tacloban on Leyte in 1944. *National Archives*



of these civilians were well-founded. Whether it was a Red Army squad in eastern Germany or Poland, a Japanese squad in China, Korea or the Philippines, or a German squad in France or Holland, the sight of these men – boys, really – meant certain destruction and misery: looting, rape, murder and torture.

An exception to this horrible precedent existed only in areas where American soldiers served. Whether in France, Italy, Belgium, Korea, the Philippines or China – and come to that, in Japan and Germany after their respective surrenders – the sight of a squad of American soldiers, again heavily armed and in uniform, brought the biggest smile to people's lips that you ever saw. Ask any German over age 60, or any Japanese person. They will probably tell you: "I did not run in terror at the first sight of American soldiers because they brought not only peace and freedom, but also everyday things that meant to us, at the time, the difference between life and death: medicine, cigarettes, C-rations and blankets."

This generosity was completely unexpected. And it wasn't just on an individual-to-individual basis. Try to imagine what would have happened if the Axis powers had done the unthinkable and actually won the war. There would have been no Nazi or Japanese Imperial equivalent of a Marshall Plan – indeed, the Nazis and Tojo's thugs would have found everything about Gen. George C. Marshall's plan weak and contemptible.

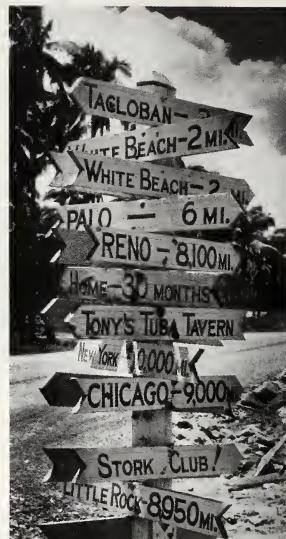
First of all, neither of these na-



**Following a hard day, a few members of the 25th Infantry Division gather around a guitar player for a few songs in January 1968.**  
*National Archives*

tions would have had the financial wherewithal to accomplish such a plan, but more importantly, they had not the slightest inclination to do such a thing, even if it would have been economically feasible to do so. The Co-Prosperity Sphere of the Japanese Empire and the planned 1,000-year reign of the Third Reich took gleeful pride in their ruthlessness – the only use for a defeated foe was as a slave. It is no exaggeration to state that the wonderful world of peace and prosperity that we all now enjoy was a direct result of the farsightedness and mercy of Gens. Eisenhower, MacArthur and Marshall.

**The Secret of His Success.** Defining virtues like liberty and mercy differentiated GI Joe from his opponents not just in the goals for which he fought, but in the way he waged war. At every turn, he demonstrated an ability to think for himself, to take the initiative as he saw it. This quality proved crucial to his success. The Allies'



**Above:** Airman 2nd Class Don W. Murray flashes a victory smile from the gun blister of his B-29 "Superfort" after shooting down a communist fighter over Korea in October 1952. *National Archives*

breakout through the hedgerows of Normandy stemmed in no small part from the development of the Rhino tank, an adaptation that answered a desperate need and one that came not from the drawing boards in Detroit but from the guys on the line.

And when things didn't run smoothly, the GI indulged in perhaps his most cherished and unique right of all: the American soldier's right to gripe about his current lot in life. Complaining in the Wehrmacht, Red Army or Imperial Japanese Army could mean a transfer to a forward area, internment in a concentration camp or immediate execution as an ex-



Above: A sailor tattoos his buddy aboard the USS New Jersey in December 1944. National Archives

Left: Ken Kozakiewicz, left, learns of the death of a fellow crewman after a mortar struck their tank in the battle of the Euphrates Valley during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. AP



Above: A machine gun crew in Chateau Thierry, France, in June 1918. National Archives

Right: The 20mm gun crew aboard a World War II Coast Guard fighting ship won an enviable reputation for speed and accuracy. National Archives

ample to others. The response varied, but the result was the same: a death sentence.

The American military stressed obedience, true, but it knew better than to apply such draconian measures. It could have only backfired. The strong sense of fair play imbued in the boys on the front would have prevented them from accepting it. The average American GI draftee considered himself a civilian first. He couldn't wait to get home, and he cherished the remnants of civilian life that the military allowed him. He usually made no bones about it — something that made him loved by not only his fellow Americans, but also by those in the lands he occupied. Bill

Mauldin's "Willie and Joe" were about as far from a heel-clicking Prussian officer as you could get and proud of it. But God help you if you stood in the way of their ultimate goal of returning home to their loved ones.

America had sent her young men and women halfway around the world in both directions not to conquer, but to liberate. And they did — not only the occupied countries, but Germany and Japan as well. It was one of the greatest moments, not only in all of American history but in all of human history. After completing an interview, I always ask veterans, "What did it all mean?" Some of them strongly reply, "How the hell can I answer a question like



that?" Others tell a joke: "Brotherhood and apple pie."

Some give thoughtful answers. One said he had done his part in turning the 20th century from one of darkness into one of light. Another said, "Listen, Steve, I was 18 years old. I had my whole life ahead of me. I knew the difference between right and wrong, and I did not want to live in a world in which wrong prevailed, so I fought."

Right there is the hallmark of GI Joe. In the first decades of the bloodiest century ever, German, Japanese and Russian boys were brought up not to know the difference between right and wrong. They grew up knowing they were superior to everyone else. With



**Kim Pak Soon is taught the fundamentals of baseball by Air Force Staff Sgt. James W. Black in Korea in March 1951.** National Archives

that knowledge came the right to molest, to murder.

In spite of abysmally poor television programming, music and video games that glorify senseless violence – in spite of urban decay, drug abuse, and other domestic challenges – I believe American boys and girls overwhelmingly are brought up to know the difference between right and wrong. It's impossible for me to imagine American teenage soldiers doing to defenseless civilians what Serbian troops did in Kosovo, what Indonesian troops did in East Timor and elsewhere, and what the German boys did wherever they went during World War II. Beyond freedom, GI Joe has returned to the world a sense of progress.

**A Better World.** At the beginning of the 20th century, everyone in the western world believed that every day, and in every way, things were getting better and better. How could they not? They were coming out of the 19th century, a century that brought about electricity, the telephone, the telegraph, railroads, automobiles, the beginning of modern medicine, the stock market and much more. In three years would come the first airplane. Obviously things were getting better, and progress would continue.

Then came World War I. By its end in 1918, with millions dead and no clear "winner," it was difficult to believe in progress anymore. Then came the failed peace treaty called Versailles. Then the Great Depression, which we often forget affected not only the United States,

but also the larger world outside of it.

In 1939 came World War II with Hitler, Tojo, Mussolini and Stalin. It ended only with two mushroom-shaped clouds over Japan and was followed by the Cold War. The Soviet Union developed its own atomic weapons and the means to deliver them. Progress was unthinkable.

By the time I was in junior high and then in high school, right after World War II, our common assumption was that someday, somehow, the world would be destroyed in a nuclear holocaust. Either that or totalitarianism would take over the world, including the United States. Today, thanks to GI Joe and his allies around the world, the communists have joined the Nazis and the fascists – with but a few notable exceptions – in the ashcan of history where they belong.

Today it is democracy that is on the march. Today we can once again, as we did at the beginning of the 20th century, believe in progress. Things have changed here at home as well, thanks in large part to GI Joe. It is the American armed forces that have taken the lead in integrating our society. Of course, we have terrific gender and racial problems and too many rich people and too many poor. But the armed forces have brought in women and blacks and Spanish-speaking Americans and American Indians and Americans from all parts of Asia. They have brought them in as enlisted personnel, as NCOs, as junior officers or as senior officers. In doing so, the armed



**Three aviation machinists' mates work on a SNJ training plane at Jacksonville Naval Air Station in November 1943.**

National Archives

forces of America are ahead of all other institutions in this country. They are ahead of the educational establishment, ahead of the churches and ahead

of the politicians.

Now GI Joe is building a military force that is not designed to battle the Red Army on the European continent but rather to keep the peace in Africa, the Middle East, the Far East, eastern Europe, and Central and South America. GI Joe can move faster and farther than ever, but he and she still carry candy and fight for liberty.

Leading the way toward full integration, toward our dream of a meritocracy, GI Joe has made this a better country. Leading the forces of justice, he has made this a better world. These are the reasons why he is unique among soldiers of this or any other time, and why I nominate GI Joe as the Person of the 20th Century. □

*Stephen E. Ambrose is a best-selling author and historian. His books include "Citizen Soldiers," "D-Day" and "Band of Brothers." He is currently researching World War II in the Pacific for a book and a documentary. If you served in the Pacific theater, Stephen Ambrose invites you to send your memoirs, photographs or film footage, diaries and collections of letters to his office at P.O. Box 1713, Helena, MT 59601. Please indicate whether or not you wish your material returned. If you would like to record your oral history, contact Ambrose's office at (406) 443-7943 or visit [www.stephenambrose.com](http://www.stephenambrose.com).*

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# *The* WAGES *of* WAR



Gulf War veteran Brian Martin suffers from a variety of maladies he attributes to the "soup" of toxic substances he was exposed to while serving in the Persian Gulf. AP

# Will a grateful nation default again?

BY RICHARD SEVERO AND SID MOODY

**I**N the years following the Vietnam War – when veterans began to suspect that exposure to the chemical defoliant known as Agent Orange had caused their health to deteriorate, and key officials in the Veterans Administration were telling reporters not to believe them because veterans were just looking for a handout and journalists should pay them no mind – people began to wonder what would happen after the next conflict, the one we call the Gulf War.

The question was easier to ask than to answer: Would VA and the Department of Defense finally take veterans seriously and commit the government to do the fair and proper thing – a seemingly modest policy that had somehow largely eluded the U.S. government since the American Revolution? Or would our government be the same in its non-protection of the reasonable interests of veterans who bitterly recall the Veterans Administration and Pentagon after Vietnam?

Even though more than a decade has passed since the Gulf War formally started with the Jan. 17, 1991, Allied strike against the Iraqi army, it still isn't possible to answer this vital question with any sort of clarity.

For Bernard Rostker, who served as special assistant to the deputy secretary of defense for the Gulf War from 1996 to 2001, the government's response to the Gulf War Syndrome was essentially the "same old, same old." Of government's role, he asserted that, "We did not listen to the veterans, nor did we provide them with the information they needed." He calls the government's response to the complaints of illnesses after the Gulf War "too little and too late." That sounds suspiciously like what critics were saying in the 1970s after Vietnam, when the Agent Orange scandal surfaced.

Thomas Cadmus, chairman of The American Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission, offered the perspective of the nation's largest veterans organization. "To be fair, you have to give the government some credit; its efforts in this area have been unprecedented," he said. "However, governmental action did not happen overnight, nor did it happen without outside pressure from The American Legion. Not wanting our government to repeat the blunders it made in the past when deal-



**Gulf War veteran Chris Yarger walks with the aid of a cane outside of his Abilene, Texas, home. Seemingly routine household tasks take Yarger hours to accomplish and leave him physically and mentally exhausted. AP**

ing with issues like Agent Orange, The American Legion worked hard to make sure that the concerns of our Gulf War veterans didn't fall by the wayside. But it's far from being over; a lot more needs to be done. There are many questions that still remain unanswered."

As of early this year, the Pentagon, VA, and Health and Human Services had spent \$155 million on 192 projects researching and validating health complications reported by the Gulf War's 697,000 veterans. VA says it has given physicals to at least 80,000 veterans, and the Pentagon reports it has screened some 40,000. A

slew of public meetings have been conducted. Web sites and 800-numbers have been established. There is communication. It would seem that there has even been some liberalization of how benefits are structured. As of July 2000, 143,000 pension and compensation claims were reported granted out of 165,000 processed. Some government sources are now conceding – in contrast to how Agent Orange victims were stonewalled 20 years ago – that certain health symptoms

*"There is nothing new about the government's inability to get to the heart of health problems that occur among veterans after a war."*

resulting from war may be unclassifiable, but that does not make them any less real, an admission the beleaguered Vietnam vets would have appreciated. A full 60 percent of government studies into the Gulf War illnesses are continuing, though researchers say it is "unlikely that a single precipitating agent or event will be identified ... as having a unique, previously recognized symptom." The raw statistics seem to suggest that the government is close to saying a self-evident truth at long last: that war is dangerous to the health of combatants, whether or not they suffer discernible wounds.

But those statistics, impressive though they may seem to some, should not cloud an even simpler truth that a great many Gulf War veterans continue to have health problems that have neither been specified nor cured, even though President Clinton directed his medical investigators to "leave no stone unturned." If you look beyond the government data and public-relations spin, it would seem that a great many stones have been left unturned.

The Gulf War Syndrome, as it is frequently called, is a tent with many inhabitants who complain of memory loss, muscle and joint pain, insomnia and diarrhea. They fear genetic damage. In their pain and in their fear of being forgotten, they are not unlike Vietnam veterans, who had similar symptoms plus a few more, including testicular and other forms of cancer, miscarriages, deformed children, stillbirths, loss of sex drive, low sperm counts, lumps and festering sores all over the body. Both Vietnam and the Gulf War were fought in a symphony of chemicals. Those chemicals came in different delivery systems. The chemicals of war are either potentially lethal or seriously debilitating to anyone who ingests them.

In Vietnam, the suspect chemicals were wrapped up in a host of various defoliants used in the vain hope of defeating the Vietnamese by uncovering their hiding places in the jungle. The most famous of these was Agent Orange, although defoliants with the code names Agent White,

**U.S. Air Force planes spray the defoliant chemical Agent Orange over dense vegetation in South Vietnam in this 1966 photo. AP**

Agent Pink, Agent Purple and Agent Green were also used.

In the Gulf War, the chemicals were in the form of depleted uranium, used in armor-piercing shells, pesticides, controversial inoculations for anthrax and possibly nerve gas, and the foul smoke from more than 600 oil wells torched by an Iraqi army that had to retreat or be obliterated.

How should we evaluate the health effects from all these things? It is a maddening question.

For example, how do we evaluate the prognosis of the 113 U.S. soldiers who were the accidental targets of U.S. gunners using shells that were made of depleted uranium? This stuff is an isotope cousin of the fuel of nuclear bombs. Cancer is associated with the radiation given off by uranium. Will increased cases of cancer eventually be the result, once the latency period runs its course in the next 10 years?

"No conclusion can be drawn ... but evidence indicates no connection to lung cancer," was the conclusion reported in December 2000 by the Institute of Medicine, an independent arm of the National Science Foundation. But researcher Fletcher F. Hahn told *The New York Times* in January that depleted uranium was associated with the development of soft tissue cancer in lab animals that, he said, should be a "warning flag." In contrast to him, the Rand Corp. looked at fallout dust from exploding shells and concluded that such material was "an unlikely health hazard." Who are we supposed to believe?

And what about all the reports that Saddam Hussein might have used poison gas against our troops, as he did against his own people?

The Pentagon doubts it. Of



course, not even the Pentagon can dispute the release of nerve gas that occurred after the war ended in March 1991, when U.S. forces blew up an Iraqi ammo dump containing 372 kilograms of sarin, a frighteningly powerful nerve gas. The public did not know about this until 1996 when U.N. inspectors reported that sarin had been stored in the dump. "The delay left some veterans skeptical, and understandably so," Cadmus says.

And what are we to make of the dead sheep reported by an army sergeant the night the fighting began? Or the recollection of another soldier that "all the insects were dead" after an Iraqi missile attack? Or of the observations of an American civilian worker who said he felt a burning sensation all over his body, his lips numb for a week, his joints aching, after Iraqi munitions exploded in his area near the front? A decontamination team first said mustard gas was detected, then said the blasts had been sonic booms. The civilian's fellow



Jackie Graves sits alongside her husband's grave as she listens to a 2001 Memorial Day service at the Florence National Cemetery in Florence, S.C. Graves' husband, a 25-year U.S. Army veteran who was exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam, died from cancer last November. AP

workers were ordered to keep their mouths shut. And what about the sergeant who said she was ordered into protective anti-gas gear after a Patriot missile intercepted an Iraqi Scud missile? She recalled the smell of ammonia. She became ill, broke out in a rash and now, she says, she suffers from memory loss, headaches, fatigue, joint and muscle pain, shortness of breath, intestinal problems and erratic blood pressure. Nobody seems to know what's wrong with her, but most veterans think somebody ought to know. They are not about to let scientists "out-professional" them, as was the case after Vietnam, when certain "experts" issued a lot of double-talk.

And what does the future hold for the 250,000 troops who received something the soldiers called "PB," a pretreatment for nerve gas exposure, or for the 150,000 who took the anthrax vaccine? One study of British vets could find no relation between the vaccine and chronic multi-symptom illnesses. Does that close the book on this question? The Pentagon concedes its own record-keeping was poor as to who went where and was exposed to what. That, the government says, was to confound Saddam's intelligence people. The

Pentagon also said 20 years ago that it did not know where all the troops were in Vietnam at any given time, thereby making an epidemiological study either impossible or valueless. Gulf War veterans do not want to hear that excuse now.

How will VA's doctors diagnose or even define an undiagnosed illness? What's the treatment for illnesses that nobody seems to understand? For a time after the Gulf War ended, VA and the Pentagon seemed to shrug off undiagnosed ailments as "psychosomatic" and were inclined to leave it at that. To Clinton's credit, he directed them to go further. But many questions are still unanswered. And what happens if, as expected, federal budget tightening causes cutbacks for medical research in VA or the Pentagon? Is it possible that we will have then gone through yet another war without knowing definitively what has happened to the health of our veterans? Is it possible the government will stop looking for answers, as it did after the Agent Orange mess unfolded?

Cadmus pointed out that the government claims it has turned a corner with what it has learned from the Gulf War. "Rest assured, whatever the future may bring, The American Legion will continue to safeguard the interests of

our nation's brave men and women," he said.

Others, like Dr. Meryl Nass, an anthrax specialist, are still skeptical. "If you never look for something, you are sure never to find it," she said.

There is nothing new about the government's inability to get to the heart of health problems that occur among veterans after a war. But Americans, whether they are veterans or not, should understand the problem is by no means limited to scientific and medical questions. It might be useful here to briefly review, in reverse order of chronology, just a few ethical lapses and questionable decisions that came out of Washington after some of the wars that preceded the Gulf War and Vietnam.

**The Korean War (1950-1953) -** This wasn't even called a war by our government, which, to allay public apprehensions about where it was going, preferred to call it a "police action." Since it was a non-war that Washington started without having definable, achievable military objectives, it was a non-win that Washington got. When it started, Gen. Douglas A. MacArthur promised the troops would be "home by Christmas." But after the North Koreans defeated inexperienced American



**During the war, Dr. William Erwin Mayer asserted that a third of all Americans captured in Korea gave in when the communists subjected them to brainwashing. The government gave credence to Mayer's beliefs even though no proof was ever offered. Above, American POWs are repatriated in Korea.** National Archives

troops in initial battles, President Truman had neither the desire nor the mandate to mobilize the experienced manpower that could begin to cope with such a foe. It was the 1950s, only a half a decade after we won World War II; Americans were in no mood to fight World War III. Washington came to believe that the best course was to end the war where it was and by 1951, the United States, Korea and China – which had already committed 100,000 of their troops to the fray – were engaged in peace talks. As the months went by without peace, and grim stories emerged about what the Koreans and Chinese were doing to U.S. prisoners of war, what came out of Washington was a public-relations onslaught, which essentially blamed the soldiers for the indecisive way the politicians had conducted the war. First, it was suggested that those who had been prisoners of war had succumbed to communism. This neat little lie was never retracted, not even after the Defense Department learned that of the 14,428 Americans who had been returned to the U.S. side from POW camps, only 565 were questioned at all about their conduct as prisoners.

All but 192 were immediately cleared of any wrongdoing, and of the 192, only one was ever reprimanded for his conduct.

Dr. William Erwin Mayer became the army's chief scapegoater, and he spent years suggesting that American troops had revealed a weakness that was psychopathological. He asserted that fully one-third of all Americans captured in Korea gave in when the communists subjected them to brainwashing. The government gave credence and circulation to Mayer's remarkable beliefs even though no proof was ever offered, either by him or by those who agreed with him. The emergent facts about the soldiers who fought the Korean War failed to support him. Quite the contrary. But the John Birch Society supported him. So did Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis. So did Betty Friedan, who was to win fame for her feminist writings. Without issuing any facts, Friedan suggested that the soldiers had been made passive by their mothers and were "apathetic, dependent, infantile, purposeless ... shockingly non-human." FBI Chief J. Edgar Hoover, who then had credibility, jumped into the

fray as well, complaining of the "softness" of America's young. He offered no facts. Neither did Dr. Benjamin Spock, everyone's favorite common-sense pediatrician, who publicly asked, "Are American youth underdisciplined, overcoddled?" He accepted Mayer's writings uncritically.

A few writers took issue with the libel and slander against a generation of American troops. The hardest-working of these was Albert Biderman, a scholar, sociologist and World War II veteran. The researcher showed clearly that the Americans who fought in Korea upheld the military and moral standards of the country as well as others had done in previous wars. And he demolished Mayer's myth that POWs had succumbed to communism. He wrote a book on the subject titled "March to Calumny," published in 1963 by Macmillan and now out of print. Years later, Biderman wrote, "it is ironic that the legend that painted the American soldier so ungloriously should have been spread so eagerly by military men." To this day, many Korean War veterans who have heard the hogwash spread by Mayer and others but do not know it was a massive spin effort on the part of the government to save its own hide. A generation of good men was thus besmirched, and the veterans of the Korean War thought of themselves as forgotten soldiers for years to come. Some of them still feel that way.

**World War II (1941-45)** – The World War II story need not be retold here. The country was united against an enemy both evil and mad, and the Americans acquitted themselves well, as they always do when they are given direction; their victory was glorious. The GI Bill of Rights was arguably the most enlightened piece of social legislation ever passed in this country, providing homecoming vets with the time, money and training to become successful civilians. But since memories are short, many younger Americans who now praise the GI Bill and the Congress that passed it don't realize

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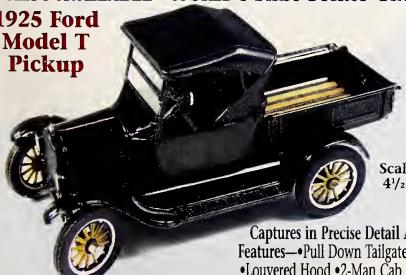
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that the measure came close to not passing at all. President Franklin D. Roosevelt fully supported the GI Bill, which was strongly pushed by The American Legion. But people at home thought that when the GIs came home, massive unemployment would follow, as they sought to get their old jobs back. And there were men in Congress like Rep. John E. Rankin, D-Miss., chairman of the House Veterans Committee, who saw himself as the conservative guardian of taxpayer funds. He tended to oppose any sort of social legislation. He thought the proposed GI Bill was a boon to the unmotivated, a waste of time. He also viewed the prospect of exposing untutored veterans to the educational process as dangerous and even unpatriotic, since it would bring them in contact with college instructors, who he viewed at best as excessively liberal, at worst the dupes and apologists of communists and Jews.

"I would rather send my child to a red schoolhouse than to a red schoolteacher," Rankin said. Even worse, in Rankin's view, was the idea of educating the blacks who had served. He thought they were largely incapable of benefiting from higher education. The people opposed to the education component in the GI Bill were not confined to Congress. Robert M. Hutchins, president of the University of Chicago and a man thought to be enlightened, said he was afraid that if the veterans came home and wanted to go to school, "colleges and universities will find themselves converted into educational hobo jungles. And veterans unable to get work and equally unable to resist putting pressure on the colleges and universities, will find themselves educational hobos." But the GI Bill was nevertheless drafted – based largely on language supplied by Harry W. Colmery of Topeka, Kan., a past national commander of the Legion, who was supported by Rep. Edith Nourse Rogers, R-Mass., a strong advocate of veterans' rights. Roosevelt signed the bill into law on June 22, 1944, as Americans fought in Europe to



In a 1918 photograph near the front-line trenches of France, Army Maj. Evarts Tracey of the Engineer Corps illustrates the true effects of phosgene gas. *National Archives*

capture Cherbourg and fought also in the Marianas in the Pacific. Veterans complained the measure did not go far enough, but the \$50 billion measure caused the government to thank veterans as they had never been thanked before. Nothing like it has happened since.

**World War I (1917-18)** – When the veterans of World War I came home, America was entering a decade of red-hot economic activity. But the country had no GI Bill of Rights, no government program designed to help soldiers readjust to peace and participate in the economic banquet that was unfolding. And although some of the veterans of World War I prospered with everyone else, veterans as a whole had higher unemployment and poverty rates than anyone else in the country. The American Legion grew out of a caucus of World War I veterans who met in Paris in 1919, and by the early 1920s, the Legion was growing quickly, claiming a membership of 700,000. But new Legionnaires never dreamed they would have to put up with anyone even remotely like Charles R. Forbes, whom President Harding appointed in 1921 to be executive director of the Veterans' Bureau, a predecessor of the Veterans Administration, now the Department of Veterans Affairs. It was an unusual selection, since Forbes had been a deserter from the U.S.

Army in 1900, just two months after he took an oath to serve his country. But he overcame that little difficulty and served in France during the war, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel and winning a Croix de Guerre in the bargain. There isn't the space here to detail all Forbes' activities but suffice it to say:

■ Forbes decided to add beds to the veterans' hospitals and spent \$33 million to provide only 200 of them – all of them inexplicably in Memphis, Tenn.

■ He later ordered the creation of a hospital in Excelsior Springs, Mo., which was literally planned and executed without a kitchen. It remains unclear as to where he thought veterans would eat.

■ On one occasion, although the Veterans' Bureau already had thousands of gallons of floor wax on hand, he acquired yet another shipment for which the government paid \$70,944.45 – enough, it was said, to wax a floor the size of South Dakota.

■ He sold (to his own profit) 67,000 quarts of government-owned medicinal booze, along with millions of dollars in morphine, cocaine and codeine, that he found in a government warehouse, where it had been stored since before Prohibition. He also sold at huge discounts to private individuals other items that were supposed to be used by veterans – 754,680 new bath towels, 84,000 best quality bedsheets,

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**Veterans cheer Rep. Hamilton Fish, one of The American Legion's founders, who fought for World War I veteran bonuses on Capitol Hill. *Bettmann/CORBIS***

98,995 pairs of winter pajamas (handmade by the women of America and which had been donated to the Veterans' Bureau by the Red Cross) to a shady company known as Thompson-Kelly. This outfit got \$7 million in goods that had been slated for veteran use for a mere \$600,000.

■ Under Forbes, the Veterans' Bureau paid dentists \$5,627,851.54 for fixing the teeth of former soldiers. Later, in court, it came out that the dentists fixed teeth that didn't need fixing and that the government was being charged for gold fillings by dentists who used copper, nickel and brass.

Forbes and others were eventually tried and convicted of defrauding the government. He spent 20 months in Leavenworth. But when he died in 1952 at the age of 74, one newspaper called him "a retired soldier and politician." The failure and waste of the Veterans' Bureau led to its reorganization and renaming as the Veterans Administration, but not until the decade had run its course, the stock market crashed and the country plunged into the Great Depression.

Veterans of the Great War were told to be patient, but increasingly, given their dire economic straits, they began to clamor for a bonus for their service. The Legion, mindful that many of its members had never prospered in the 1920s when the rest of the country did, backed them up. It issued a statement in

*"The raw statistics seem to suggest that the government is close to saying a self-evident truth at long last: that war is dangerous to the health of combatants, whether or not they suffer discernible wounds."*

1930 saying that a bonus "would materially assist in the relief of present distressful economic conditions and put new life into American business."

The government did not listen. It issued no bonus – banks were opposed to it, saying bonuses would be "bad" for the economy – and in the summer of 1932, veterans made an impromptu march on Washington. At first, little attention was paid to them, but the number of veterans swelled to an estimated 40,000. Congress did not budge on the bonus question. One day, while singing "America the Beautiful," they approached the Capitol to publicly voice their demands. Washington newspapers suggested the march was the work of communists or, perhaps, fascists. The vets were neither, but President Hoover decided the time had come to rid Washington of them. He asked Gen. Douglas

MacArthur, then Army chief of staff, to move the veterans out of the business district and back to their makeshift shacks in the Anacostia section. But MacArthur feared the veterans were there to try to overthrow the government, implausible though it seemed. MacArthur pressed Maj. Dwight D. Eisenhower, his aide, into service, but Eisenhower was not enthusiastic about MacArthur's mindset. When MacArthur assembled 600 troops, including 200 mounted cavalry, five tanks and a machine-gun unit, it seemed to Eisenhower that MacArthur was going too far and the two reportedly argued. Using tear-gas and infantry with bayonets fixed, MacArthur moved against the vets, and federal troops burned out the vets' camp in Anacostia. They fled Washington.

In the days that followed their removal, the attorney general issued a report, calling the veterans "the largest aggregation of criminals that had ever assembled in the city at any one time." What "crimes" they committed went unspecified.

The spectacle probably helped cost Hoover the election that November. And it convinced Franklin D. Roosevelt that no such scene would ever unfold in his administration, hence his unqualified support in the 1940s for a GI Bill. After his election, Roosevelt said that like Hoover, he opposed the bonus. But Congress soon passed one anyhow, over his veto.

Such were and are government's machinations over the wages of war. □

*Richard Severo covered the Agent Orange affair for The New York Times. He also co-authored "The Wages of War," a history of American veterans, with Lewis Milford (Simon & Schuster, 1989).*

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the skills and judgment of the men and women who use it.

This was clearly revealed during the Persian Gulf War in 1991. For almost 20 years the United States had struggled with the difficult transition from a partially drafted force to an all-volunteer one. We had cast aside the crutch of forcing young men to defend us, relying instead on men and women who did so willingly, persuading them with respect, deeply satisfying careers and decent compensation for them and their families.

The results were striking.

We had built a powerful warrior class. For the first time in modern history, a major war was fought entirely by troops who had volunteered, who had of their own free will elected to serve. U.S. troops did not have one blessed draftee, not even reluctant "volunteers" who signed up one step ahead of the local draft board. They were all men and women who chose U.S. military service. When the war was over, no sudden dismantling of military power followed. Most of the men and women simply returned to their military bases and reserve units.

Since the Gulf War, America's armed forces have continued to perform remarkably well in many difficult, dangerous situations in which the nation has had vital interests. Today they stand calmly in many trouble spots around the world and often, by their presence alone, avert flare-ups that could escalate into something more widespread and dangerous.

**An Issue of Maturity.** Why is an all-volunteer force so critical to the kind of an armed force we need in the 21st century? Why don't we just draft those we need? Why persuade when we could simply force people into the armed forces? I think we have found the answer is a simple and practical one: it just doesn't work as well.

Take something as prosaic as age. One little-known factor that contributed significantly to the superiority of the all-volunteer force that fought in the Persian Gulf, and to the military strength

today, is the maturity of our servicemen and women.

When America fought in Vietnam in the late 1960s, the median age of a U.S. trooper was 21. Almost half the troops who fought that war in Vietnam were barely beyond being children; most were hastily trained, not old enough to vote, and often just did not want to be there. Many officers were not much older. Stepping aside from military strategy, is it any wonder we had difficulties when those troops were faced with the dangers of a guerrilla jungle war?

Two decades later, the average age of the enlisted men and women President George H. Bush ordered to the Persian Gulf was 26. They had all chosen to serve; they were well trained; they could all vote. And they had the confidence and judgment that only comes with age and experience.

The officers were considerably older. The average age of a female officer was 30. The average age of a male officer was 32. There was a time when, perhaps, younger men may have been physically superior to older ones. But times have changed. Today's weapons – from planes to tanks to nuclear weapons – require a lot more brain power and training than physical strength and agility.

Ever since Nixon moved to end the military draft in the early 1970s, the average age of our military force has increased slowly and steadily, almost unnoticed. The soldiers who defend us today are the result of almost 30 years of free choice, an armed force of mature men and women with the seasoned judgment, skill and seriousness of purpose that only a few extra years of living can bring.

Our soldiers are an extraordinary group. In terms of gender and race, the armed forces of the United States have probably made the greatest strides of any other large organization in diminishing racial and gender prejudice. The military may not be perfect, but in this regard it has a better record than most other groups. It is well-educated and well-mannered, especially for a group of warriors trained to

**Vietnam War protesters burn their draft cards in New York in 1965.**

American Legion Library

kill if necessary to defend us.

One small hangover remains from our past experience with the draft – draft registration. Today, in 2001, we as a nation still require every teen-age male to register with the federal Selective Service within 30 days after turning 18. The official reason is to keep the country "prepared to conduct a fair and equitable draft in a crisis, if needed." But any serious military crisis in today's world is unlikely to wait six months or so to draft millions of young men, and then another six months to give them basic training. In terms of readiness and combat capability, the draft no longer makes any sense.

But draft registration still persists. Every year the Selective Service System spends \$25 million making lists. And every year, at least for the past decade, an increasing number of youngsters neglect to register. Today more than 12 percent of young American males don't bother to register – and no one seems to look for them.

One small thing we might do to honor the brave and competent men and women who do defend us is to wipe out this anachronism and put the \$25 million a year toward increasing their salaries.

In America, the all-volunteer force protects the most precious thing we have – our liberty. And for that, and for all the other blessings we enjoy, we need to remember and honor the men and women who defend us and make it all possible.

Every now and then we might even thank them.

Let me begin. Thank you. □

*Martin Anderson is the Keith and Jan Hurlbut Fellow of the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. He has served as a second lieutenant in the Army Security Agency and is the author of "The Military Draft," "Conscription" and "Registration and the Draft."*

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*In a trend  
that mirrored  
civilian society,  
the 20th century  
saw women rise  
to prominence  
in America's  
armed forces.*

BY JAY STULLER

**B**ORN with a military ID, the daughter of 1st Sgt. Edward McMillion adored her father and his chosen profession. She loved the snap of parades and the rhythms of an Army base. By the age of 10 she knew how to prepare duty rosters. As a high school freshman, Gwendolyn McMillion joined ROTC and later departed the University of Alabama with a degree in business management and as a ROTC Distinguished Military Graduate.

At 41, the sergeant's daughter still has her military ID; now, though, it identifies her as Lt. Col. Gwendolyn Bingham, Commander of the 266th Quartermaster Battalion at Fort Lee, Va., the lieutenant colonel can't imagine her life evolving any other way. "From the time I was a child I was interested in the military lifestyle and the educational benefits it offered," she explains. "I even married another military brat. But my story is not unusual. Today's army has a large number of females in key command assignments. And we are very good at what we do."

Indeed they are. But for much of the 20th century, Bingham would not have had the opportunity to follow in her father's footsteps. In fact, for nearly 50 years, women weren't officially allowed in the peacetime military. With mainstream American social values stacked against even the brightest, most talented and ambitious females, women also were excluded from most positions of



authority in civilian business and government.

Such values have changed mightily in recent decades. Women today run Fortune 500 corporations, serve in Congress and perform brain surgery. From commanders to crew chiefs and mechanics to pilots, women also are woven into the fabric of the nation's military. Their freedom to do so was won by some remarkable pioneering women who provided critical support to America's armed forces during two world wars and other hostile actions.

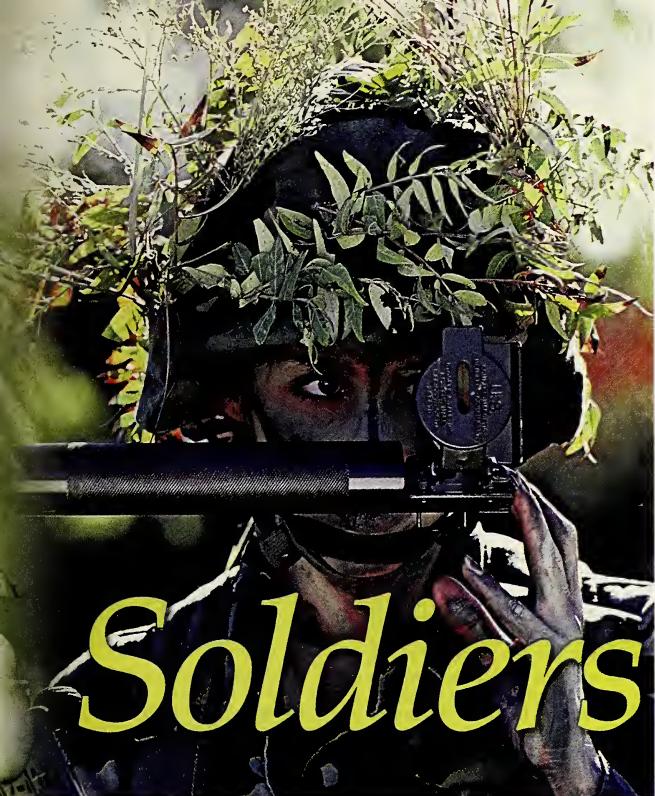
Through conflicts great and small, women served as nurses, communications experts and pilots ferrying aircraft to the front. At home and overseas, women handled jobs previously thought suited only to men. While officially not combatants, women died in every major American war.

As historian and author Linda Grant De Pauw notes in "Battle Cries and Lullabies: Women in

**Pilot Elizabeth L. Gardner of Rockford, Ill., on the runway of Harlingen Army Air Field in Texas during World War II.** National Archives

War from Prehistory to the Present," females have always been involved in armed conflicts. While few societies had the luxury of completely shielding women from wartime hazards, De Pauw writes that there's a "deep conviction, shared by most people since Neolithic times, that the gender roles of mother and warrior should be forever distinct." Still, opinions shift in the face of war, security concerns and social circumstance. And the fact is, women have long been indispensable to the U.S. military.

**Partnership of Privilege.** This year marks the centennial of the Army Nurse Corps' 1901 founding, which was followed in 1908 by the Navy Nurse Corps. These patriotic organizations came to



## Signal Intelligence Specialist Michelle Kowalski sights in an antenna during field exercises.

DOD

gether just in time. During World War I, some 33,000 American women served as nurses and as "yeomen (F)," the latter mainly in secretarial and communications roles. Several hundred women, including YMCA volunteers, were killed in shipboard accidents or while serving in France.

One who made that sacrifice was Helen Fairchild.

Army Nurse Fairchild, from central Pennsylvania, volunteered for overseas duty in May 1917, just one month after the United States declared war. Assigned to Flanders, she tended the wounded from the third battle of Ypres, despite enduring a painful gastric ulcer, night bombings and gas attacks. On Jan. 18, 1918, Nurse Fairchild died. She was 32.

Her death was officially caused

by "acute atrophy of the liver," perhaps related to her ulcer. But stories persist that Fairchild gave her gas mask to a soldier and thus suffered direct exposure. When The American Legion Nurses Post 412 in Philadelphia was founded in 1919, it was named after Fairchild.

Such women helped galvanize support for the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. President Wilson said, "We have made partners of the women in this war; shall we admit them only to a partnership of suffering and sacrifice and toil, and not to a partnership of privilege and right?" Adopted in 1920, the amendment finally allowed women to vote.

**More Than Nurses.** While World War I was no small conflict, World War II placed a much greater magnitude of pressure upon America's resources and people. As men left the country to serve in Europe and the Pacific,

women stepped into key jobs at factories, shipyards and munitions plants. Of the 400,000 women who served in the military, many were nurses. As with their sisters in Flanders, the job put them in harm's way.

Army, Navy and Red Cross nurses were sent into zones closed to most American military women, De Pauw writes. "Army and Navy nurses were on duty at Pearl Harbor during the Japanese attack. Others served on Bataan and Corregidor when the Japanese invaded the Philippines." Nearly 80 were taken prisoner.

Moreover, it wasn't long into World War II when it became clear that the U.S. military desperately needed women for non-medical roles. Gen. George C. Marshall knew the United States didn't have the luxury of sheltering so much of its population from the fight, so he ordered the War Department to create the Auxiliary Corps, which was established in 1942. A year later the auxiliary was dropped and the Women's Army Corps became part of the Army, and its members were granted full military status. Meanwhile, Marine Corps and Navy Women's Reserves were established, and the Navy's females later became known by the memorable acronym of WAVES, or Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service.

Some of the most notable World War II volunteers were the pilots of the Women's Auxiliary Ferrying Squadron and the Army Air Force Women's Flying Training Detachment. The two groups were merged in 1943 and redesignated as Women's Airforce Service Pilots, or WASPs. These women flew fighters, bombers and trainers across continents and over oceans. Thirty-eight died in the line of duty.

Meanwhile, American nurses and communications experts slogged through mud on Anzio. One of those nurses was 24-year-old 2nd Lt. Ellen Ainsworth of Glenwood City, Wis. An artillery bombardment in February 1944 began laying waste to the hospital ward near the beachhead and included one direct hit. Although gravely wounded, Ainsworth calmly and confidently guided pa-

tients to safety, gave assistants orders and inspired others to avoid panic. She died six days later and was awarded not only a Purple Heart but a posthumous Silver Star for bravery. Considering the risks, it's astonishing that only 432 American military women were killed during that war.

**A Sense of Adventure.** While Korea was a smaller war in terms of numbers, U.S. Army nurses were on the peninsula four days after the first troops landed. Their work in Korea's mobile army surgical hospitals was made famous by the film and television series "M\*A\*S\*H." But some of the nurses served in the air, like Capt. Lillian Kinkela Keil, of the Air Force Nurse Corps. Capt. Kinkela Keil already put in time during World War II, flying more than 200 air evacuation missions.

When Korea erupted, she left her job with United Airlines and re-upped, flying several hundred more missions as a flight nurse. The inspiration for the 1953 movie "Flight Nurses," Kinkela Keil is one of the most decorated women in military history, with such honors as the Air Medal with Three Oak Leaf Clusters, the American Campaign Medal, the Korean Service Medal with Seven Battle Stars and others.

Although Congress passed the Women's Armed Services Integration Act in 1948, allowing women to serve in the regular active peacetime services, they were capped on pay grades and denied most spousal benefits that their male counterparts automatically received. By policy, women were not allowed command authority over men. President Truman signed an order discharging any woman who became pregnant or a parent by adoption or marriage.

In the peacetime era of the 1950s and early 1960s, the military held little interest for women, with a few spectacular exceptions. One was Air Force Capt. Barbara A. Wilson, a fireball then and now and an informal counselor to thousands of women in the services and an outspoken advocate for what military women can accomplish.

"I might sound like I did KP in the Civil War," says Wilson from her St. Augustine, Fla., home.

*From commanders to crew chiefs and mechanics to pilots, women are woven into the fabric of the nation's military.*



**Petty Officers 3rd Class Florence Johnson and Rosamund Small, at the Naval Air Gunners School in Hollywood, Fla., in 1944, were the first WAVES to qualify as instructors on electrically operated 50-caliber machine gun turrets.**  
National Archives

"But as a teen-ager during World War II, I was too young to enlist. Still, I had a sense of adventure. And though my parents weren't thrilled when I wanted to join the Air Force, that probably made me want to do it even more."

In the early 1950s, Wilson worked in communications at Hamilton Field in Novato, Calif., a bustling base just north of San Francisco. During her days off, she cadged rides with pilots and sweet-talked her way into more than a few turns at the controls. "I got the chance to ride along and fly in C-47s, C-54s and you name it," she recalls.

Ambition and charm propelled Wilson into fields for which she was most naturally suited, as a journalist on base newspapers and later in Air Force public relations. Stationed in New York City from 1955 to 1960, "I was on just about every game show televised," she recalls. "That was a plush assign-



**1st Lt. Elaine H. Niggemann changes a surgical dressing for James J. Torgelson, a civilian employee for HNA Inc., at the 24th Evacuation Hospital in Vietnam in 1971.** National Archives

ment." Yet Wilson also ventured into substance.

She was the first WAF to complete college and earn a bachelor of arts degree under "Operation Bootstrap" at New York's Long Island University. In the 1960s she became the first WAF to obtain a commission after completing OTS. Wilson also earned an MBA through an Air Force program at Southern Illinois University, commanded a WAF squadron and was eventually promoted to major, a rank she had to decline. "My mother got sick; there was no one else to care for her and I had to leave the military," Wilson says.

Well, not completely. Known as both "Captain Barb" and "Captain Critical," Wilson is a leading authority on women in the military. Her "Military Women's History" Web site includes some of the most extensive links – and forthright opinions that Wilson describes as "rants" – on the Internet. She also gets dozens of e-mails daily from military women seeking her counsel.

"There's still an undercurrent among some military women who feel they're not treated as equally as are women in the public sector," Wilson says. "The evolution is clearly not complete."

Like other major trends in America, a shift began with Viet-



**Capt. Sylvia Pavlovich, Army nurse of the 8209th Mobile Surgical Hospital, U.S. 8th Army, administers whole blood to a wounded soldier during the Korean War.**  
Military History Institute

an album full of photos of her in exotic cities all over the world. Her name was Sandra Foster; I remember her that well.

Manning got her opportunity to see the world, spending two years at Pearl Harbor during the start of her career, three years in London near the end and plenty of other places in between. She's now a director at the Women's Research and Education Institute in Washington, which provides research for Congress. An authority on women's military issues, Manning says the

demise of the draft and the opening of the service academies to women were perhaps the two largest factors for change.

"Before 1972 the military didn't really need women, except during major wars," she explains. "With an all-volunteer force, the services had to recruit from the entire talent pool. Based on what women did in World War II, and what they were starting to do in civilian life, it was obvious what was possible. But the military had to find out for itself."

That it has done.

**Women Today.** Women were, of course, an integral part of Operation Desert Storm – on the ground and in the air. Today, women comprise more than 14 percent of the active-duty personnel in the armed forces. Some 20 percent of the Army's enlisted force is comprised of women, who also fill 19 percent of its officer corps. About 27 percent of the Air Force's enlisted troops are women, as are 24 percent of its officers.

And astronauts? Air Force Lt. Col. Eileen Collins has piloted the space shuttle and served as commander of a 1999 mission on the Columbia, which carried an X-ray telescope into orbit. Inspired by

stories of the WASP pilots, Collins, 43, earned her pilot's license while attending Syracuse University. Shortly after graduation, she became one of the first women to go directly from college into Air Force pilot training. A T-38 instructor pilot and C-141 commander before becoming an astronaut, Collins has flown more than 5,000 hours in 30 types of aircraft.

"What's really making a difference is experience and seniority," Manning says. "It takes about 20 years to rise to the rank of colonel. You now have 30 women generals and admirals on active duty. Each of the four Department of Defense services has a woman serving at the three-star rank." Times have changed.

Along with the recent books and television shows, the role of women in the military also is being celebrated at a new U.S. Army Women's Museum, which opened at Fort Lee, Va., in May. An upgrade from the former Women's Army Corps Museum at Fort McClellan, Ala., the 13,325-square-foot facility houses more than 5,000 artifacts, 40 exhibits and 300 videos. Representing all women who have served in the Army from the Revolutionary War to the present day, the museum and its Web site – [www.awm.lee.army.mil](http://www.awm.lee.army.mil) – offer tremendous insight into the often overlooked role of women warriors.

Since women started gaining seniority, a generation of female leaders did much to change the military, starting with the late and now-legendary computer wizard Adm. Grace Hopper, who coined the term "bug in the computer."

Moreover, the entire nation can take pride in women who during times of crisis stepped forward to work in factories or serve as frontline nurses and pilots. And when the American military became an all-volunteer force, it was women who stepped forward and filled roles that had long been denied them, yet for which they were supremely qualified. Now woven into the fabric of the nation's armed forces, these sister soldiers are an indispensable asset. □

*Jay Stuller frequently writes for The American Legion Magazine.*

*Article design: Holly K. Soria*



**Hazel Carter of Douglas, Ariz., donned an Army uniform to be near her soldier husband during World War I.** National Archives

nam. Between 1963 and 1975, more than 10,000 American women served in that country, most as part of the Army Nurse Corps. Young and idealistic, many came away with the same kind of traumatic stress that affected male veterans.

Their struggles then and now are finally gaining recognition. A Discovery Channel show titled "Women at War" examined the role of American nurses in Vietnam. A lengthy series of personal stories on the Salon.com Web site also recently explored the stories of female Vietnam vets. Though Vietnam was in many ways a national low point, the end of both the war and the draft brought down barriers, including many inequitable aspects of the 1948 Armed Services Integration Act.

Retired Navy Capt. Lory Manning says she felt privileged to see most of those rules disappear during her career. A 25-year Navy veteran, Manning joined the service in 1967. "At the time, most of my friends went to college and ended up as elementary school teachers," the New Jersey native recalls. "That's a fine profession, but I wanted to travel. I visited with a female Navy recruiter in New York City, who showed me



*"Hidden behind  
the routine, under  
the surface of life  
in the prison  
camp, was fought  
a war of wills for  
moral supremacy  
— an endless  
struggle, as bitter  
as it was  
unspoken,  
between captors  
and captives."*

**— Maj. James  
P. S. Devereux,  
World War II POW**

*In His Country's Service, 1964-1970—  
Over 1600 U.S. Servicemen are  
Prisoners of War or Missing in Action  
in Southeast Asia*

FORGOTTEN WARRIORS:

# Voices *from* Captivity

*Faith helped American POWs survive capture and imprisonment.*

BY ROBERT C. DOYLE

THE American prisoner-of-war experience in the 20th century has been one of suffering and uncertainty. Circumstances have often been shocking: catastrophe was normal, normally catastrophic. Cultural veneers of POWs faded quickly from capture to repatriation; death was close, life precious. Stripped of outside contact and often in silence, Americans combined a powerful faith in God, country, cause and friends.

In an effort to assure the humane treatment of captured combatants, the international community of nations crafted the Hague Convention and later the Geneva Convention. These rules were set in place to protect soldiers from the time of their capture to their transport and from their imprisonment to release and repatriation. POWs were to be treated humanely, Hague and Geneva Convention signatories said. But were they?

**Capture.** Remembering trench warfare and how he became one of the 4,120 American POWs during World War I, Mike Shallin wrote, "... the Germans were all around,

with one of them yelling, 'Komerouse, Komerouse.' We didn't have a prayer, so they nabbed all 32 of us." Remembering his capture, Harold Willis, an American pilot with the French, wrote, "I had always thought of the possibilities of being killed or wounded but never of being captured, so I was unprepared. I must confess that, when I found myself alone in my cell, I burst into tears like a child."

Thousands more Allied POWs faced similar predicaments. During World War II in Europe and Asia, enemy forces captured more than 130,000 Army, Navy, Air Corps and Marine combatants. Approximately 17,000 Americans and 12,000 Filipinos surrendered to the Imperial Japanese Army when Bataan fell in April 1942. Corregidor fell a month later. During their first year of captivity, more than 5,000 American prisoners died. More than 80 percent of Filipino captives died the first year. By war's end, more than 14,000 Americans perished in captivity.

Capture and surrender in Europe was usually safer for Allied prisoners, but not for troops of "B" Battery, 285th Field Artillery Observation Battalion.

After surrender near Malmédy, Belgium, in December 1944, SS troopers ordered the American captives into a tight formation. Suddenly, a junior SS officer ordered a half-track to open fire. Some Americans broke and ran as three machine guns began

to cut them down. After the prisoners had fallen, SS men approached the scene with small arms and began shooting the survivors. If they moaned, they were shot; if they moved, they were shot. After the infantry left, German tanks sprayed the killing field with machine-gun fire. In the end, 81 bodies remained – 41 shot while they were lying on the ground. Three escaped. Later, 26 soldiers were pulled to safety by American troops who discovered them after the SS left.

It was little better than six years later when soldiers from the North Korean Army and the People's Republic of China began taking American prisoners.

Sgt. Lloyd Pate's commanding officer ordered him to cease firing. His lieutenant realized that his unit was overwhelmed and surrounded by Chinese infantry, and any more armed resistance would have been a futile waste of lives. Pate recalled, "I did the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life: lay down my weapon and raise my hands."

One war later, Air Force Col. Norman A. McDaniel, on a mission over North Vietnam in 1966, baled out after a SAM missile struck his aircraft. With the aircraft in flames, McDaniel faced the first of his decisions: eject or die. On the ground facing the enemy, McDaniel recalled he could smell the hate. "They tied my hands behind me . . . when I mentioned the Geneva Convention, they laughed in my face."

**Transport.** After taking prisoners, captors forced Allied POWs to un-

**Artist Maxine McCaffrey's acrylic "In His Country's Service – U.S. POWs & MIAs 1964-1970" hangs in the Pentagon as a memorial to American soldiers who were taken captive in North Vietnam.**

Courtesy United States Air Force Art Collection

dertake dangerous journeys to places of permanent imprisonment with intermittent stops along the way. At times, enemy soldiers executed POWs for trifles such as begging for water, walking too slow or falling down.

After his capture in 1917, Norman Archibald described his train ride to a prison camp: "In a compartment with the guards in strategic seats in the four corners, doors and windows were locked, and revolvers were brought to light." His guard said in English, "If you try to escape, we shoot you."

Enemy attitudes toward the Allied POW changed little in the ensuing 25 years. World War II brought with it a new term — the death march. Before their surren-

*"I did the hardest thing I ever had to do in my life: lay down my weapon and raise my hands."*

**- Sgt. Lloyd Pate,  
Korean War POW**

der in April 1942, Americans on Bataan had little food and few medical supplies. The captives began their march in a severely weakened physical condition.

The Japanese never prepared for such large numbers of POWs, and the Americans feared a heavy death toll. Bill F. Gurule said, "Many, if not most, were bayoneted or shot by the Japanese without provocation whatsoever as we staggered on." On the Bataan march and thereafter in

the prison camps, Americans suffered unimaginable cruelty from individual Japanese soldiers, and, in the end, held Japanese leadership responsible for war crimes.

As the war continued, the Japanese began to transport their prisoners to Japan, Formosa and Korea by sea. The POWs called the old Japanese merchant vessels "hell ships" for good reasons: temperatures in the holds rose to more than 100 degrees; water was scarce; food was only a

## Thirteen months as a POW

*Two missions away from going home, a young B-26 gunner is taken captive.*

BY ROBERT K. FESTA

Two more missions and I could go home. A 20-year-old gunner on a three-man B-26 crew, I took off from Kunsan Air Force Base for my 48th combat mission over enemy territory. It was 10:50 p.m., Aug. 9, 1952.

About five hours into the six-hour mission, we had already made our last pass. Low on ammo, we were in a valley when the right main gas tank was hit, and our right wing caught fire. At about 1,500 feet, we bailed out. The chute opened, and before I could look down, I hit the ground. The navigator, Capt. Robert C. Henry, dislocated his elbow and was in great pain. The aircraft crashed about 200 yards away, and the unspent ammo exploded as it burned. I hid the parachutes.

We heard voices and saw flashlights. North Koreans were milling around the aircraft. In darkness, we stumbled in the opposite direction, through heavy underbrush and across small streams.

About an hour after sunrise a line of soldiers spread across the valley in front of us. They quickly spotted us and fired, hitting all around us. We did not return fire. When they took our dog tags I was sure we'd be killed.

The North Korean soldiers marched us through the center of a nearby village. I imagined the villagers saying "These are the ones who were flying that plane last night, dropping bombs and shooting."

I figured this was about the end for us. Instead, we were taken to a local interrogator who told us that our

pilot, Capt. John P. Ahlers, was killed.

The following evening, we traveled south through a number of military areas controlled by North Koreans. They taunted us, saying an American plane would pick us up later. The North Koreans tried to set Capt. Henry's arm, but all they did was hurt him more.

We arrived in Pyongyang — a place called "Pox's Palace" — about Aug. 15, 1952. The compound of mud huts with one exit was guarded 24 hours a day. We were fed two bowls of gray, watery rice a day and slept on dried mud floors infested with lice and fleas. Every other day or so, we were allowed to wash in the river. We had no electric lights. No hot or cold water.

Nothing. About a week after being captured, I finally ate. One day while working in the fields, I stole a clove of garlic, which improved the flavor of my rice 100 percent. From then on, if I could steal anything, I would.

After a failed escape attempt by two prisoners, the North Koreans began heavy interrogations on all prisoners. I was threatened, beaten, and made to stand in a cold stream. A North Korean officer trying to get information I didn't have once hit me until he was out of breath. I later found out you could say "I don't know" and they would accept it.

In October, we were transferred to a Chinese camp north of Pyongyang, about 20 miles south of the Yalu River.

The Chinese treated us more humanely. We had boiled white rice with cabbage or potato soup twice a day, and we did not have to work every day. I always volunteered; it was a relief to go anywhere else. Sometimes we got a toothbrush, sometimes toothpaste. A small supply of sugar and tobacco ap-



Robert Festa in 1952.

dream. Dehumanized men died in their own filth. These vile journeys became particularly dangerous because the Japanese refused to paint "PW" on the hulls of the ships, and, tragically, when American submarines did their work, their captains and crews had no knowledge that the slow-moving, zig-zagging targets contained captive human cargoes.

In Nazi Germany, treatment of Allied POWs during transport was usually less severe. Americans, who called themselves Kriegies - short for "kriegsgefangene," or POW in German - experienced three types of removals. They faced long train rides in over-crowded boxcars to the stalags at the beginning of captivity; march-

es through towns where prisoners were put on display for an angry civilian population; and "black marches" in the snow during the winter of 1945. As groups of prisoners began marching through the towns, crowds grew larger, and civilians often screamed, "Luft Gangster, Schwein, Schwein." No Kriegie forgot this, nor did they forget the filthy conditions on those often-unmarked trains.

During the winter of 1945, thousands of American Kriegies awaited liberation. Hoping to use POWs as bargaining chips with the western Allies, the Germans decided to move as many Kriegies as possible from the eastern camps to the west. Robert J. Thornton, an American from

Stalag Luft IV in northeastern Germany, participated in one snowy winter hike that lasted 87 days. "Dysentery was so bad," Thornton wrote, "that we gave up many times, but the 'buddy' system saved us. When one reached the end of his rope, the others would tie a knot in it. This worked very well."

In Korea, if a POW survived capture, he marched north to the permanent camps along the Yalu River and the Chosin Reservoir. At the point of capture the communists often confiscated prisoners' heavy clothes and combat boots, forcing them to march nearly barefoot in the coldest weather. The average food ration was one rice ball per day with

peared once a month.

In November, each prisoner was given a cotton padded suit, a hat, and sneakers but no underwear. I put that suit on in November and did not take it off until June. I always had lice. In June, a summer suit with underwear was provided.

Playing cards greatly improved morale. Air Force Capt. Ronald Chester Harry was a bridge master who taught us how to play. We wore out every deck of cards they gave us. They also gave us two books involving violent revolution - "The Three Musketeers" and "Man in the Iron Mask."

The Chinese tried to indoctrinate us into the "good life" communism brought to Russia, China, and North Korea. All we had to do was look around and compare. Periodically, the Chinese would separate us for five to eight days in isolation for candlelight interrogations at odd hours of the night. My best answer remained "I don't know."

We entertained ourselves as much as the Chinese would allow. At Christmas and Thanksgiving, we had an amateur hour or variety show. I read as much as possible, and some of us studied math from an Australian officer who wanted to author a textbook.

Escape was not practical. No one could live off this land in winter. Being non-Korean, we would be easy to spot and had nowhere to go. Four prisoners once escaped and had an eight-hour head start. They were soon recaptured and marched back to camp. As punishment, they had to write a self-criticism on why they should not escape. We had a few laughs over that.



Before his 13th mission, Festa, left, stands with, left to right, Navigator Capt. Robert Henry, group operations officer Major Wolfe, and pilot Capt. John P. Ahlers. Photos courtesy Robert Festa

In December 1952, just after Christmas, my family received word from the Air Force that my name appeared as MIA in the Russian newspaper *Pravda*. The Air Force encouraged my family to write to me, and in the spring of 1953, the Chinese allowed us to send a postcard home. I thought then that we might be going home soon.

That summer, we were treated much better. We even had canned beef. I weighed 130 pounds when I was captured and estimate that I weighed 90-95 pounds during most of my captivity.

I was released on Sept. 4, 1953. At Pan Mun Jom, I passed through the "freedom gate" into a waiting Army ambulance. A helicopter then flew me to a MASH unit where I took my first shower in 13 months. What a day for me! I still remember it.

After 13 months in one of the most humanly degrading situations you can imagine, I tried to turn my back on the military after I came home. But I could not do that. I used the GI Bill and received a degree in electrical engineering from Indiana Institute of Technology, which led me to a position with Southern New England Telephone Co. I recently retired after 32 years of service.

I loved my time in the U.S. Air Force and being with the people of the 13th Bomb Squadron who put themselves in harm's way, night after night, never fully knowing the possible outcome.

Korean War veteran and former POW Robert K. Festa lives in Stuart, Fla.

little or no water. On the march, the North Koreans forced their captives to parade through towns on display for the local populace. Execution often threatened POWs not able to continue marching due to exhaustion, frostbite, illness or weakness.

On Sept. 26, 1950, approximately 376 Americans began the Seoul-Pyongyang Death March. Three weeks later, after walking more than 250 miles, 296 tired and frightened Americans arrived in Pyongyang. Another 1,000 or so American prisoners began a march from Kuna-ri to Camp 5 at Pyoktong – 300 died along the way. More than 700 Americans began a march from Bean Camp to Changsong. Only 100 survived to repatriation. Other death marches included Pyongyang to Camp 3 and the two-part march from Chosin Reservoir to Kanggye to Camp 1 at Changsong.

The U.N. War Crimes Division discovered several North Korean massacres committed prior to or during the marches north, including murders on Hill 303, inside the Sunchon Tunnel, at Taejon and at Kaesong. In each case, a few Americans were not mortally wounded. Refusing to panic, they played for time beneath the bodies of dead comrades and waited for rescue.

In North Vietnam, American POWs were loaded on trucks and taken eventually to Hoa Lo Prison, the French-built jail in Hanoi known to the Americans as the Hanoi Hilton. Directly after shoot-down but before the trip to Hanoi, local North Vietnamese militia often seized opportunities to express vengeance or propagandize the event. The American prisoners hung tough but suffered the wrath of outraged civilians. For downed fliers, the truck ride itself was dangerous. Tied, bound and sometimes gagged, and in most instances shocked or wounded from the bailout, the pilots bounced around the truck's cargo bay for the whole trip while drivers pounded potholes and



**American prisoners during the Bataan Death March were often beaten with their hands tied behind their backs.** National Archives

swerved to miss huge, gaping bomb craters. Often the wounded pilots arrived in Hanoi in terrible shape, not a good omen for what was to come in their long captivity.

In South Vietnam, the Vietcong conducted dangerous marches from the point of capture to their jungle sanctuaries. The Vietcong understood how valuable their prisoners were; they feared discovery, and tried to avoid American detection. They knew that the Americans searched for their POWs on the ground and by air. The Vietcong knew too that if

they were sighted in possession of one or more American prisoners, Brightlight POW recovery operations would be launched very quickly.

**Prison Landscape.** Allied POWs who survived capture and transport almost always faced grim circumstances on arrival at enemy camps. In permanent prison facilities, time stood still. Food became an obsession, and no POW ever forgot the cells or the filth.

After World War I, Navy Lt. Edouard V.

Isaacs described contrasting cuisine in two enemy holding facilities: shipboard and POW camp. At sea, while a prisoner in U-90, he dined in the wardroom with the ship's officers. The captain reminded Isaacs that navy food was the best in Germany and advised him to eat well. "God knows," Isaacs wrote, "he spoke the truth." Isaacs also discovered that the camp near Villingen had fleas so numerous that they made life miserable. It was impossible to get any disinfectant, although Isaacs asked the commandant

## America's peacekeepers deserve Geneva Convention protections

Combatants captured and imprisoned in times of declared war have been promised humane treatment, first by the Hague Convention and later the Geneva Convention. But the same protections are not afforded peacekeepers or combatants in undeclared wars.

According to current Department of Defense policy, U.S. military personnel captured during peacekeeping, peacemaking, humanitarian or nation-building operations are not designated as prisoners of war. Instead, they are classified as hostages or detainees with no legal rights under the Geneva Convention.

At its September 2000 National Convention in Milwaukee, The American Legion again ex-

pressed a longstanding call for the DoD to change that policy.

By resolution, the Legion calls for American military men and women captured during these types of operations to be granted full POW status and afforded all the protections of the Geneva Convention.

The Legion also resolves that a stronger policy is required by the U.S. government to ensure that every military man and woman who is captured by hostile forces knows his or her government will take whatever measure is required to secure their release, including the use of force. Those belligerents who violate such a policy should be held accountable, the Legion says.

*"They tied my hands behind me . . . when I mentioned the Geneva Convention, they laughed in my face."*

— Col. Norman A. McDaniels,  
Vietnam War POW

and the doctor for some. It would have been a small matter to fumigate the barracks, but Isaacs's captors considered it unnecessary for mere prisoners.

When World War II began for the United States in December 1941, Camp O'Donnell was a partially completed airfield about eight miles west of the Manila Railroad line at Capas on the island of Luzon in the Philippines. It was a perfect spot for the Japanese to put their first American prisoners, survivors of the Bataan Death March, who learned that no international agreements protected them. William Wallace, a Camp O'Donnell prisoner, recalled, "The further we went into captivity, the worse it became. I learned the human body can suffer nearly everything and still survive."

In Europe, only 1 percent — or 1,124 of the 93,941 captured Americans — died in captivity, most from wounds received in combat. Rank was respected; Red Cross food packages arrived periodically, and the Germans permitted the Red Cross to inspect the camps. Some medical attention was given, and some sick and wounded prisoners were exchanged. Life was hard but generally not lethal, and, although badly debilitated, most Kriegies returned home alive. The prisons in Korea and Vietnam were far less humane.

After the winter marches north to the camps, POWs in Korea suf-

fered from sickness and exhaustion. Ralph D. Moyer recalled that the Chinese told his group that the permanent camp had running water, electric lights, and warm rooms. Upon arrival, they discovered the village was the same as all the others, drab and forlorn-looking. Once in camp, mortality began to take hold. Moyer recalled that in June 1951, the Chinese refused to let the prisoners bury their dead. He looked across the Chosin Reservoir about a half-mile away and saw Korean hogs feeding on the remains. U.N. POWs then discovered they became "students" in a game of ideological tug-of-war; winner takes all. John W. Thornton recalled that the communists "quickly informed us that they would give the business to anybody who didn't learn their lessons properly."

Between 1964 and 1972 in Vietnam, 766 Americans became confirmed POWs. In South Vietnam, many American POWs were kept in bamboo cages. In the north they languished in cells. Like POWs before them, Vietnam POWs adjusted to the environment or died. Camp regulations were posted periodically to make sure that everyone understood their status in the camp. According to John M. McGrath, NAM POWs,

camp regulations were weapons of terror used by the captors to justify inflicting punishment — torture — upon the prisoners, and no way could the Americans obey.

Distinguished Vietnam POW veterans such as Jeremiah Denton and Robinson Risner remarked that Americans followed the code of conduct as well as they could, each prisoner knowing it served as a moral and ethical yardstick measuring what one ought to do for one's self and other prisoners of war — namely, escape, resist, hope and provide mutual support. Although



Former American and Australian prisoners of war warm up before a stove in the 24th Division medical clearing station after being returned to U.S. lines by Chinese communists in February 1951. *National Archives*

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114 POWs died in captivity, Vietnam POWs came to terms with a captivity that swallowed them up as the great fish swallowed the biblical Jonah.

**Resistance.** POWs faced three major choices: discard anything that hints at cooperation; deceive captors into mistakenly thinking they are cooperating; or attempt to dodge a captor's attentive focus – what the Korean War prisoners called “playing it cool.” Why? In resistance, the POWs understood their captors better. No longer stereotypes, interrogators and guards become real people, often ferocious ideologues who demanded absolute obedience, often liberally using torture or threats.

During World War II, the harshest treatment took place in the Dulag-Luft – Durchgangslager Luftwaffe – the transient camp for captured airmen operated by members of the German Air Force intelligence service. More than 60 English-speaking interrogators were assigned to the camp built to handle the growing number of Allied fliers shot down over Germany. It was in the Dulag-Luft that the “cooler” was first used and threats of torture imposed when skilled German interrogators attempted to pry intelligence data from their Allied Kriegies. In the camps, British and American Kriegies called their German guards and prison camp personnel “goons,” a term borrowed from popular prewar comic-book characters. As a form of resistance, German-speaking Kriegies would often be assigned to communicate with targeted guards. Called “goon-taming,” Kriegies got to know some guards very well in order to acquire contraband and gather intelligence for the camp’s escape organizations. Kriegies also created systems of observation teams, or “stooges,” to watch for patrolling “goons” or roving “ferrets” whose task it was to seek out and destroy tunnels. “Stooges” created sophisticated non-verbal com-



**American prisoners of war celebrated the Fourth of July in the Japanese prison camp of Casisange in Malaybalay on Mindanao, P.I. They risked execution if guards discovered the celebration.** National Archives

munication networks consisting of shuffles, knocks, hand signals, whistles, songs and body movements that signaled warnings to tunnelers, forgers, traders and “goon tamers” that potential trouble was near.

Captivity in Asia required a different sort of resistance pattern. With no recourse to international conventions, Allied POWs suffered slow deaths, never just shooting. Bayonet practice was conducted on live POWs who were tied between bamboo posts. Executions took place when a POW showed a spirit of “willfulness.” Japanese atrocities against resisters started during the Bataan Death March and continued until liberation in 1945. Marine Maj. James P. S. Devereux, captured on Wake Island, summed up the predicament. “Hidden behind the routine, under the surface of life in the prison camp,” Devereux wrote, “was fought a war of wills for moral supremacy – an endless struggle, as bitter as it was unspo-

*“Dysentery was so bad that we gave up many times, but the ‘buddy’ system saved us. When one reached the end of his rope, the others would tie a knot in it.”*

—Robert J. Thornton,  
World War II POW

ken, between captors and captives.” The main objective of the whole Japanese prison program was to break the spirit; the Americans fought to keep it. After the end of World War II, Americans found themselves having to resist the North Koreans, communist Chinese and North Vietnamese. Sgt. Lloyd Pate of Macon, Ga., president of the Korean War POW Association, chose to be a member of the group the Chinese called reactionaries, those determined prisoners who resisted offers of better treatment for cooperation and propaganda production. “I was a reactionary because I was stubborn,” Pate wrote. “I didn’t like a guy to stand over me and preach things I knew were a pack of lies.”

In Korea, Vietnam and Iraq, American POWs experienced torture as enemy policy. Prisoners always knew they would be tortured if they answered incorrectly or improperly. The sight of the torture chamber usually confirmed the reality of the threat, and at this point, many potential victims gasped at the systematic application of pain and lost their determination to resist. Others suffered until death; however, most POWs found themselves somewhere on a sliding scale between the extremes. Reflecting on his experience in Hanoi, Robinson Risner, who suffered greatly for his firm resistance, wrote, “In my wildest imagination I had no idea American POWs would be treated as inhumanly and cruelly as we were.”

Why take torture? Prisoners looked to their senior ranking officers for guidance. Risner and James B. Stockdale understood that this question had to be answered. Stockdale understood that in captivity a clear conscience is as important as food. Both must be maintained in order to preserve a will to live and dedication to victory. Survival based only on fear and guilt was the tool of the captor. Stockdale wrote, “All this torture seems to me a mere acceleration of the basic process of unhooking a victim with fear and po-

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American servicemen, former prisoners of war, cheer as their aircraft takes off from an airfield near Hanoi as part of Operation Homecoming in February 1973.

National Archives



larizing him with guilt." Stockdale and the other senior leadership in Hanoi refused to allow that. John Dramesi, escaper and resister in Hanoi, said it well: "It was a battle of wills, not wits."

In January 1991, hostilities erupted between a coalition of nations – including the United States – against Iraq over the invasion and occupation of Kuwait. During the first week of the war, prisoners were taken on both sides. President George H. Bush summoned the Iraqi ambassador to the White House to remind him by formal letter that all the countries were signatories to the 1949 Geneva Convention. In the one-month war, Iraq took 23 American POWs but refused to allow the Red Cross to inspect its POW facilities. In Iraqi captivity, POWs suffered physical abuse that ranged from sexual abuse of two women, electric shocks, bone-breaking, and routine slaps. Psychological torture ranged from threats to cut off fingers to placing unloaded weapons at the POW's head and pulling the trigger.

**Release and Repatriation.** Survivors experience release as a happy, sometimes sad, return to their own world. Some grieve the loss of comrades, especially those who died needlessly or suffered greatly. Others grieve the loss of time away from home and family. Many died prematurely from wounds and illnesses acquired in battle or in camp. Reflecting on his repatriation from Japan, Carl Nash of Harlem, Ga., wrote, "Getting liberated back into this country was like being born again." Kriegie Al Johnson had a more practical reflection: "I got

*"After 1,775 days of captivity, on the 14th day of March 1973, I returned to the greatest nation that God has ever given to this old planet of ours – the United States of America."*

– Giles Norrington,  
Vietnam War POW

14 months of back pay, and it was big in those days – well, enough to get married." Vietnam POW Giles Norrington commented: "After 1,775 days of captivity, on the 14th day of March 1973, I returned to the greatest nation that God has ever given to this

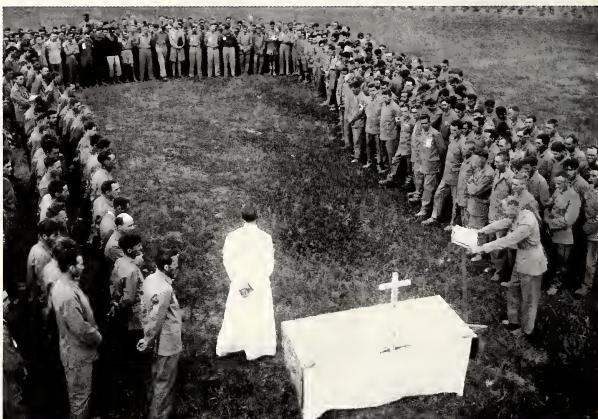
old planet of ours – the United States of America."

In 1973, representing the returning POWs from Hanoi, Jeremiah Denton stirred the nation's conscience: "We are honored to have had the opportunity to serve our country under difficult circumstances." To the end, Denton and the others followed the Code of Conduct, which says, "I will trust in my God and the United States of America." The trust held, and they returned with honor.

One can only hope that innocent human beings will never again have their lives wasted behind barbed wire. Time is, after all, the only thing in life that is irreplaceable. Rather than fading into the diffusive wake of time, the voices from captivity – loud or soft, happy or sad, strong or weak – will continue to find a special place in the American experience. □

Robert C. Doyle published the first interdisciplinary study of the American captivity experience, "Voices from Captivity: Interpreting the American POW Narrative." His follow-up study, "A Prisoner's Duty: Great Escapes in U.S. Military History," continued the story of Americans in military captivity. He teaches American history at Franciscan University and resides in Steubenville, Ohio.

Article design: Holly K. Soria



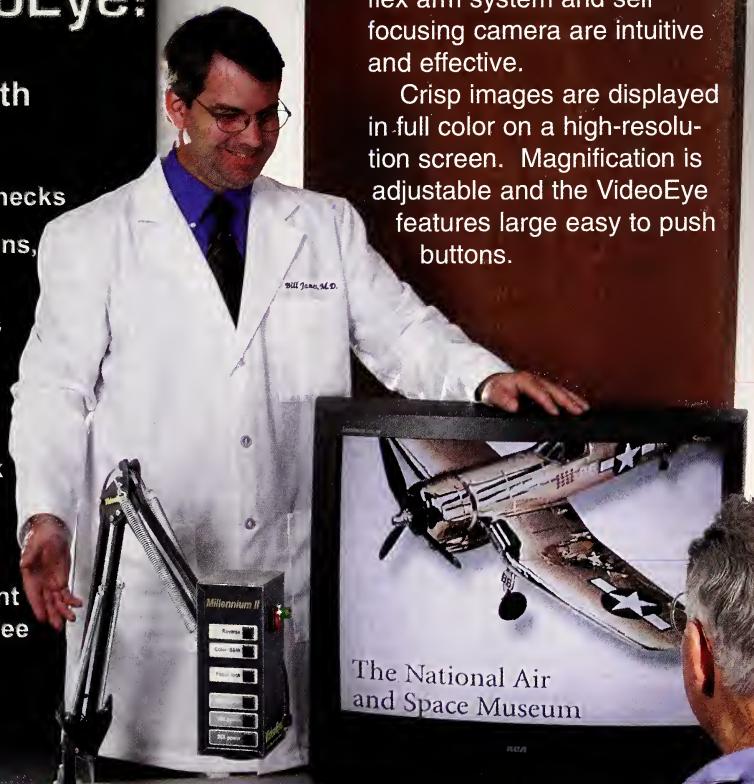
American prisoners of war participate in a service for deceased comrades at Aiyrokei, Takao Province, Formosa, during World War II. National Archives

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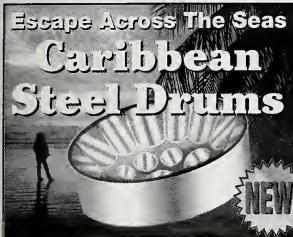
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inception,  
The American  
Legion has  
served as an  
advocate for  
veterans.*



# A friend to the GI for 82 years

BY STEVE BROOKS

**L**EGIONNAIRE James Rardon of Lafayette, Ind., wrote a letter to *The American Legion Dispatch* this past spring explaining how he had become 100-percent disabled during his military service in World War II and was eligible to receive disability payments. He thanked the Legion for serving as sponsor for his benefits.

But he also made it a point in his letter to thank the world's largest veterans organization for something else. "My biggest praise," Rardon said, "is for The American Legion and its sponsorship of the legislation for the GI Bill of Rights. On completion of naval duty at the age of 19, I returned home and enrolled in Purdue University and a received a B.S. degree in June 1950. Without the GI Bill, this would have been impossible."

The GI Bill of Rights, originated by The American Legion and passed by Congress in 1944, was landmark legislation. By providing education and housing benefits for GIs, it helped ease the transition of millions of veterans moving back into civilian life.

It is recognized as the greatest legislative achievement of The American Legion and led to educational benefits for millions of veterans through the years.



**The First Caucus at the Cirque de Paris in March 1919 where veterans of World War I founded The American Legion.** *The American Legion Library*

But it is only a part of the Legion's rich history as an advocate for both the GI serving his country and the veteran deserving his country's gratitude for a job well done.

The preamble to The American Legion Constitution clearly states the many hats the organization wears:

*For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:*

*To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and inci-*

*dents of our associations in the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.*

Through the years, the Legion has expanded on all those directives while having no equal in the fight for the rights of the GI and the veteran.

"Whenever members of Congress divide the fiscal pie, The American Legion will be there to remind them to whom an ample portion must be served: He or she who preserved freedom, justice and democracy under a cardinal vow, 'I am prepared to give my life in their defense,'" National Commander Ray G. Smith told Congress in September 2000.

Smith's words echoed those spoken by Past National Commander E. Roy Stone in 1994 when he explained The American Legion's role in serving America's vets.

"We are sort of a cross between a lobbying group and an advocacy organization that looks out for America's veterans," he said. "We believe that the contributions of America's veterans and their sacrifices have earned them special consideration."

And so, for more than 82 years, the Legion has carried the torch of that special consideration.

**In the Beginning.** The Legion's initial platform at its founding in 1919 called for better benefits for veterans through a variety of avenues: new agencies to help veterans get jobs and receive overdue pay from the government; more rehabilitation assistance for disabled veterans; protection for service members under the War Risk Insurance Act; and equal disability pay for all veterans.

The Legion also sought an increase in the minimum compensation for veterans under the Vocational Rehabilitation Act, a large standing army and more air power.

*For God and Country, we associate ourselves together for the following purposes:*

*To uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States of America; to maintain law and order; to foster and perpetuate a one hundred percent Americanism; to preserve the memories and incidents of our associations in the great wars; to inculcate a sense of individual obligation to the community, state and nation; to combat the autocracy of both the classes and the masses; to make right the master of might; to promote peace and goodwill on earth; to safeguard and transmit to posterity the principles of justice, freedom and democracy; to consecrate and sanctify our comradeship by our devotion to mutual helpfulness.*

After World War I, the Legion focused on the post-war problems of veterans, particularly the treatment of those who were disabled. With no central authority on the issue, disabled veterans found themselves staring at confusing laws and bureaucratic red tape.

The Legion concentrated its efforts toward rectifying these problems. Lobbying by the Legion helped lead to the 1919 passing of the Sweet Bill in Congress, which among other things increased total disability payments from \$30 to \$80 per month.

Two years later, the efforts of the Legion to consolidate three federal agencies into a single veterans agency were rewarded with the passage of the second Sweet Bill.

The War Risk Bureau, Federal Board for Vocational Training and Public Health Service were combined in 1921 to form the Veterans Bureau. Immediately Legion members began meeting with the director of the new bureau, Charles F. Forbes, to introduce Legion concerns and criticisms.

On Dec. 21, 1920, Rep. Hamilton Fish Sr., R-N.Y., one of the Legion's founders and a past national commander, introduced a resolution calling for the return to the United States of an unknown



**The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery is due to legislation introduced by Hamilton Fish Sr., one of the Legion's founders.** *The American Legion Library*

American soldier killed in France and his burial with appropriate ceremonies in a tomb to be constructed at the Memorial Amphitheater in Arlington National Cemetery. The measure was approved on March 4, 1921, as Public Resolution 67 of the 66th Congress, creating the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

At the 1923 National Convention, the Legion drafted 91 recommendations for improving the

way the government treated disabled veterans. One year later, the House Committee on World War Veterans Legislation was created, giving vets an actual committee in Congress to concentrate on veterans issues. Legionnaire Royal C. Johnson chaired the committee.

That same year, the Legion struck a blow for veterans compensation when last-minute work on the part of the organization's

## America's investment in GI Bill pays off

BY MARK SHIELDS

**F**IFTY-ONE years ago, 328,841 American men graduated from the country's colleges — three times greater than the number of graduates just a decade earlier. During those 10 years, which began with the nation still deep in depression, the United States fought and won World War II and the Congress passed and President Franklin D. Roosevelt had signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act, which was primarily intended to prevent unemployment among returning veterans.

Thanks to Jack Cejnar, a public-relations officer with The American Legion (which had been the most indispensable lobbyist backing the law), it would be forever known as the GI Bill of Rights.

Before the GI Bill, a college education had been not only beyond the dreams of American working-class families but nearly the exclusive experience of the children of professional and/or affluent parents.

The GI Bill changed all that almost immediately, and it changed America permanently.

The numbers tell the story. Prior to World War II, under 5 percent of Americans over the age of 25 had completed four years of college. As a consequence of the optimism and national confidence sparked by the success of the GI Bill, eventually one out of four Americans over 25 would be a college graduate.

As Michael J. Bennett reminds us in his terrific book on the social miracle the GI Bill wrought, "When Dreams Came True," while the American Legion championed the legislation, giants of American education — including Harvard President James B. Conant and University of Chicago President Robert M. Hutchins — were both adamant and elitist in their opposition.

Conant publicly expressed concern that the arrival of veterans would inevitably lower academic standards. Hutchins wrote of his fear that the vets would turn American colleges into "educational hobo jun-

famed lobbyist, John Thomas Taylor, led to the passage of the Adjusted Compensation Bill. The bill provided compensation for veterans and for the dependents of certain deceased veterans.

Those vets were paid for each day of service, either at home or overseas. The money was payable either in cash or through a life insurance policy.

President Coolidge vetoed the legislation, but the veto was overridden in both the House and Senate.

"The credit belongs to no single man, to no single unit, but to all the Legion," said then-National Commander John R. Quinn in the June 6, 1923, issue of *The American Legion Weekly*.

Lobbying on the part of the Legion also resulted in the 1924 World War Veterans Act, which consolidated veterans laws to form a firm federal government policy for disabled veterans while broadening the criteria for service-connected disabilities.

And in 1929, the Legion fought for and won passage of the Rogers Hospital Bill, which authorized nearly \$16 million toward hospital construction.

The Legion's early role didn't stop with lobbying. In 1922 alone, nearly 500,000 vets found permanent work through the Legion,

while another 200,000 found temporary jobs. Under the guidance of the Americanism division, posts became employment bureaus that worked to find jobs for veterans within their own communities.

**Through the Lean Times.** The Legion was at the forefront of the veterans fight during the Great Depression, helping convert the Veterans Bureau to the Veterans Administration. The move combined the former office with the Bureau of Pensions and the National Home for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers. Veterans affairs were now under the supervisory power of the president and the laws granting veterans benefits.

But lean economic times led to veterans benefits taking a big hit. The Economic Act of 1933 wiped out \$400 million in veterans benefits.

President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in his speech to the 1933 American Legion National Convention in Chicago, no doubt didn't endear himself to Legionnaires when he said, "No person, because he wore a uniform, must be placed in a special class of beneficiaries over and above all other citizens. The fact of wearing a uniform does not mean that he can demand and receive from his government a benefit that no other citizen receives."

But the '30s were harsh times. Veterans were thrown out of VA and military hospitals, and some who couldn't provide food and shelter for their families committed suicide.

The Legion attempted to help in many ways, setting up soup kitchens at the post level and dispersing funds to veterans through The American Legion Welfare Relief Fund.

An agreement with the Department of Labor allowed posts to screen veterans for job placement, which resulted in work for thousands of veterans. And the Legion succeeded in getting Congress to include federal job assistance to veterans in the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933. World War I veterans now had a nationwide network of job offices at their disposal to help them find work.

But the biggest relief for veterans came with the 1934 passage of Public Law 141. Based upon a series of Legion recommendations, the law stated:

■ No veteran disabled in the line of duty should suffer any reductions in benefits granted in legislation in effect prior to March 19, 1933.

■ Federal hospitalization should be provided to veterans who cannot afford it.

gles." Later, Conant would admit his error and call veterans on his campus "the most mature and most promising students Harvard has ever had."

Some 7.8 million veterans, close to half of those eligible, enrolled in a school or job-training program. Also available to GIs were loan guarantees to buy a home. That impact was profound: Before the war, two-thirds of Americans rented their homes; after the GI Bill, two out of three would own their homes.

Opponents of the GI Bill who had condemned it as a "handout" that would erode character were silenced by the social and professional mobility this law made possible.

The entire postwar cost of \$14.5 billion, neutral studies have estimated, has been returned at least seven times over to the U.S. Treasury in the form of increased tax revenues.

The GI Bill produced 450,000 engineers, 240,000 accountants, 230,000 teachers, 97,000 scientists, 67,000 doctors, 122,000 dentists and – by the early 1960s – one half of the membership of the U.S. Congress.

By 1964, three out of four Americans, not surprisingly, trusted the federal government "to do what is right" all or most of the time. Over the last quarter-century, that trust number has dropped to just one out of four. Successful presidential candidates of both parties run against the government they seek to lead and against Washington, where they strive to live.

That the air we breathe and the water we drink are safer and cleaner now is a direct result of the actions of our federal government we do not celebrate. We instead deny. That our elderly citizens are healthier and dramatically less poor because of the actions of our federal government we do not celebrate. We instead deny.

To recognize and to celebrate true national success inspires our collective optimism and our confidence in our ability to act again for the common good. That is both the value and the legacy of the GI Bill.

*Mark Shields is a political columnist based in Washington, D.C. He is a regular commentator on PBS' "The NewsHour With Jim Lehrer" and CNN's "Capital Gang." His column is distributed by Creators Syndicate.*



**Above:** Legionnaire Francis M. Sullivan swims in a sea of petitions supporting the Legion's efforts to pass the GI Bill of Rights in 1944. *The American Legion Library*



**Right:** Members of the Legion team who worked on the GI Bill legislation join others in witnessing President Roosevelt sign it in June 1944. *The American Legion Library*

■ Service-connected veterans who were given the status prior to March 20, 1933, should be allowed to keep it.

Taylor again lobbied on behalf of the Legion, and in February 1934, Congress passed the bill into law. The legislation, along with Legion lobbying to restore additional veterans benefits, helped reverse the effects of the Economic Act of 1933, which had erased the Legion's prior efforts.

**Conflict Across the Globe.** As World War II got under way, 150,000 Legionnaires went to war. The rest helped The American Legion take up the role as a leader on the home front.

Legionnaires conducted scrap-metal drives, sold war bonds and stamps and coordinated massive blood drives with the Red Cross. Posts were opened up to homesick men and women in uniform while Legionnaires worked to boost morale for troops across the country. They headed up drives to send cigarettes, records and other items to troops stationed overseas. Approximately 400,000 members served as air-raid wardens.

The Legion sponsored the Victory Corps, a high-school program

that trained young men in military drills to prepare them for war.

"Every Legionnaire and his family is at the service of the U.S. government for the No. 1 job of winning the war," then-National Commander Lynn U. Stambaugh said in 1942. "I have told that to President Roosevelt; I know that every Legionnaire wanted me to say it. Thousands of world war veterans and their sons are in the uniform of the armed forces. Those of us who must remain at civilian tasks will back up the nation's military and naval personnel with everything we've got."

But the biggest impact felt by the Legion's work in the '40s – an impact still felt today – got its start on Mayflower Hotel stationery in Washington, D.C.

That's where PNC Harry W. Colmery penned the first draft of what became known as the GI Bill of Rights, or the Serviceman's Readjustment Act of 1944. The legislation paved the way for veterans to re-enter civilian life by providing compensation for temporary unemployment and subsidies for medical care, mortgages and education needs.

The passage of the bill, which took just five months from start to finish, led to the greatest surge of college enrollment ever. Nearly 8 million World War II veterans went to school on the GI Bill,

while the home-loan provisions gave home ownership to millions of veterans.

The GI Bill of Rights has been called one of the greatest pieces of social legislation ever. But after its passage, Legionnaires didn't rest on their laurels. Instead, they campaigned for jobs on behalf of unemployed veterans, many disabled. The organization was vital in drafting the language of the 1944 Veterans Preference Act, which gave veterans a five-point preference on federal job exams.

The Child Welfare Division aided thousands of veterans and



*"As the nation's largest veterans organization in the country, the Legion has accepted a special obligation to work for the best interest of veterans in harmony with the well-being of the entire nation."*

—President Dwight D. Eisenhower



**Above:** PNC Harry W. Colmery, left, who drafted the first version of the GI Bill of Rights, talks with Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, center, and PNC Lynn U. Stambaugh. *The American Legion Library*

their families, and individual posts contributed financial help to vets who slipped through the benefits loopholes.

Legionnaires helped distribute more than 960 million units of penicillin to veterans and their families and went from hospital to hospital trying to cheer up vets who'd lost limbs in World War II. Due in large part to Legion efforts, the Department of Medicine and Surgery was created in 1946 to conduct research in prosthetics. The department was the forerunner of VA's Veterans Health Service and Research Administration.

But the Legion's efforts didn't stop with helping the veteran injured on the battlefield. In May 1946, the Legion and The American Legion Auxiliary presented the American Heart Association with a check for \$50,000 to begin more extensive research.

Posts and departments across the country followed suit, raising

money on their own while passing out educational pamphlets about heart disease. Two years later, President Truman signed into law the creation of the National Advisory Heart Council.

**The Korean War Era.** The Legion's efforts saw the passage of the Korean War GI Bill in 1952, which extended World War II GI Bill education benefits to Korean War veterans. Almost 2.4 million Americans received an education because of the bill.

Because the Korean War was called a "police action" at the time, those wounded in action were not eligible for VA benefits. Intense lobbying by the Legion finally led to Congress passing Public Law 28, which recognized those who served in Korea as war veterans.

Military service in the 1940s didn't count toward Social Security, but thanks to Legion efforts, that changed in 1950. A \$160

credit for each month of active duty between Sept. 16, 1940, and July 24, 1947, was instituted.

Improvements to the military sought by the Legion came in the form of the Reserve Forces Act of 1955, which, though not completely satisfying to the Legion, did provide a plan of basic training designed to strengthen the reserve while providing reasonable means for enforcing reserve obligations.

The Legion's biggest fight in the 1950s came in preventing the Veterans Administration from being dismantled. The Hoover Commission, created to examine cost efficiency within the U.S. government, recommended a few VA functions, primarily medical and insurance, be handled outside the agency.

The Legion, which had been critical of the VA in the past, came to the agency's defense, arguing that despite the VA's problems, using a single agency was still the best way to administer veterans benefits. The American Legion also pointed out several improvements the VA had made through the years.

Testimony before Congress by Legion leaders, along with a series of publications and an article in *The American Legion Magazine*, kept the Hoover Commission's recommendation from becoming reality.

**Vietnam and Beyond.** U.S. troops fighting in Vietnam didn't always find the support at home that they deserved. But Legionnaires across the country worked to ensure those soldiers – both the ones returning home and those still fighting – felt their country was behind them.

The Legion distributed American flag pins throughout the country, each with a card stating "Americans are serving the cause

of freedom in Vietnam. I wear my country's flag to show that I support their efforts." And in Nassau County, N.Y., Legionnaires sponsored a parade with 25,000 marchers to show support for American troops.

The Legion also was one of the first groups to lobby for a full accounting of all POW-MIAs in Vietnam. Legionnaires were urged to call or write their congressional representatives on behalf of the attempts to locate America's missing soldiers.

Job fairs conducted by Legionnaires put veterans in touch with prospective employers, schools and community leaders who could help vets find work. And the Legion reached out to veterans with the "Our Kind of Guy" program, which let vets know what VA benefits were available and how to apply for them.

The Legion supported the Veterans Readjustment Act of 1966, which made Vietnam War veterans eligible for GI Bill benefits, providing education benefits for nearly 3.8 million vets. The Legion also helped jump-start the VA's National Cemetery System, which put all national cemeteries under the jurisdiction of the VA.

The 1970s saw the Legion fighting on all fronts for veterans. President Carter's attempted civil-service reform would have diluted preference for veterans in civil jobs, but all-out lobbying by the Legion led to the measure being rejected in both the House and Senate. A year later, the Supreme Court upheld Veterans Preference.

In 1977, Sen. Adlai Stevenson III attempted to get the Senate Committee on Veterans Affairs relegated to subcommittee status under the Human Resources Committee. Then-National Commander William J. Rogers sent telegrams to every member of the Senate's Rules and Administration Committee, asking them to retain the Senate VA Committee. Legionnaires across the country sent their senators and representatives similar messages, and the proposal was rejected.

World events brought Selective Service to America's attention in 1979. The Legion believed the system in place at the time would find it difficult to provide neces-



**Medal of Honor recipient Staff Sgt. James R. Hendricks joins Marine Pfc. Martha Souders at the Chicago Service Men Center. The center was one of three where The American Legion served more than 15 tons of fried chicken to more than 45,000 GIs during World War II.** *The American Legion Library*

sary armed forces in the event of a national emergency and called for better funding of the system.

On June 25, 1980, Congress approved ending a five-year hiatus for draft registration while approving \$13.3 million to upgrade the system's computer capability and register 4 million men.

**The '80s and '90s.** Remnants of the Vietnam War carried over into the '80s, as veterans continued to be frustrated with the effects of Agent Orange and a lack of understanding by the government. So in 1983, the Legion sponsored an independent study on Agent Orange with Columbia University.

The results showed a demonstrable link between Agent Orange and the diseases plaguing Vietnam War veterans. Thus began the Legion's fight for Agent Orange benefits.

When the VA proposed closing its Vet Centers — the treatment facilities for Vietnam War veter-



**President of Goldblatt's department store, Maurice Goldblatt, purchases a war bond in the name of his son, Pvt. Noel Goldblatt, at a Legion-sponsored bond rally. During the "Dad to GI Joe" rally, war bonds totalling \$50,000 were sold in 15 minutes.** *The American Legion Library*

ans suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder — the Legion successfully lobbied to save the centers.

Attempts to tax veterans' benefits met with the Legion's opposition, and in 1983 the U.S. Supreme Court overturned a U.S. Court of Appeals decision allowing for such taxation. Ironically, the ruling came 50 years after President Franklin D. Roosevelt had stated the exact opposite.

"Veterans have been obliged to drop their own affairs and take up the burdens of the nation,



**The American Legion's Family Support Network** assists the families of military personnel on deployment. The network was formed during the Persian Gulf War. *John Simon*

subjecting themselves to the mental and physical hazards as well as economics and family detriments which are peculiar to military service which do not exist in normal civilian life," Justice William H. Rehnquist said. "Our country has a long-standing policy of compensating veterans for their past contributions by providing them with numerous advantages. This policy has 'always been deemed to be legitimate.'"

The Legion was one of the driving forces behind the creation of the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals. The move gave veterans an independent forum for deciding questions of law on their claims. Most of the provisions for the court came from the Veterans Reassurance Act, which was written by the Legion and introduced to Congress in 1988.

One of the Legion's biggest victories in recent decades came in January 1989, when the Veterans Administration became the Department of Veterans Affairs. Legion leadership asked its members nationwide to contact their congressional representatives and urge co-sponsorship of a bill turning the VA into a cabinet department. When a spoiler amendment was attached to the bill in March 1988, then-National Commander John "Jake" Comer and 100 Legionnaires attended a

Senate Government Affairs Committee hearing on the bill to register opposition. The 100 Legionnaires were a mix of constituents from the 13 states represented on the committee.

The amendment was eventually quashed, and the measure was signed into law Oct. 25, 1988, giving the head of VA the status of a full cabinet secretary and the agency the new name "Department of Veterans Affairs." This gave veterans much-deserved representation in the highest councils of government.

During the Persian Gulf War, the Legion was there every step of the way. Then-National Commander Robert S. Turner was asked by President George Bush to go to the Gulf to review troop morale.

On Oct. 11, 1990, the Family Support Network was created to assist the families of military personnel deployed during Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in the Middle East, providing everything from financial assistance to a sympathetic ear for families of soldiers in the Gulf.

In 1995, the Legion formed its Persian Gulf Task Force, enhancing the organization's service to America's newest generation of wartime veterans, thousands of whom still suffer from illnesses linked to their service in the region.

Initially, the GI Bill of Health called for open access to the VA health-care system by all veterans. Eligibility Reform was passed in the 104th Congress, opening access within existing appropriations. Another component of the bill adopted by Congress was allowing VA to bill, collect and retain all third-party reimbursements.

Unfavorable estimates from the Office of Management and Budget and the Congressional Budget Office have stagnated congressional action, but the Legion continues to push for the major components of the bill independently.

And in 1998, then-National Commander Harold "Butch" Miller, testifying before Congress, called for funding to remove asbestos from VA-owned building.

**Still Fighting the Fight.** Today, as the face of war has changed to global peacekeeping missions, the Legion continues to be an advocate of both the GI and the veteran.

At the 2000 National Convention in Milwaukee, the Legion passed Resolution No. 104, which calls for the United States to make sure the mission has clear definition of its vital interests as they relate to peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; that guidelines for the mission have been established, including a



**Georgia Legionnaire Martha Conway chats with soldiers at the Fort Benning rifle range during a Legion Reconnect visit. Reconnect attempts to make active-duty soldiers aware of the Legion's fight to preserve and enhance veterans' benefits, including benefits for those still in uniform.** *Tom Stratton*

clear exit strategy; that there be support by Congress and the American people; that U.S. forces will be commanded only by U.S. officers; and that service members captured by hostile forces will be granted full POW status.

Also passed at the 2000 Convention was Resolution No. 112, which listed proposals for ensuring a strong national defense, including higher military spending, enhanced military quality-of-life features and improved military health care.

In October 2000, National Commander Ray G. Smith formally petitioned VA to add Type 2 diabetes to a host of illnesses presumed to be service-connected due to Agent Orange exposure for Vietnam War veterans. Twenty-seven days later, VA approved awarding benefits to those veterans.

The Legion has also pushed for benefits and treatment programs for Vietnam War veterans suffering from hepatitis C.

Gulf War illness continues to take space on the Legion's plate, and the result has been the introduction of legislation in both the House and Senate clarifying the standards for compensation for Persian Gulf veterans suffering from poorly defined and undiagnosed illnesses.

The Legion is lobbying for current receipt for service-connected disabled veterans. Re-

tired military personnel are the only class of federal employees who must offset their retirement pay with disability benefits.

Thanks in part to the Legion's efforts, this practice may be coming to an end; concurrent receipt legislation was introduced in both the House and Senate this year.

The Legion successfully lobbied in 2000 for passage of Public Law 106-475, which reaffirmed VA's duty to assist veterans filing claims. Among other provisions, the law requires VA to notify veteran applicants with incomplete applications of what evidence is necessary to complete the application.

The Legion's Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation division works with veterans on a personal basis. Its staff represents veterans attempting to receive benefits and services from, among others, VA's Central Office, the Board of Veterans Appeals and armed forces boards of review.

The Legion's Reconnect Program mixes Legionnaires with active-duty personnel on military bases in an attempt to plug the military back into the local consciousness. Fort Sill, Okla., Fort Benning, Ga., and Camp Lejeune, N.C., have already been stops for Legionnaires trying to make service members aware of the Legion's fight for GI and veterans rights.

The Legion continually lob-

bies for improvements in the GI Bill. Congress passed a law increasing the bill's benefits last year, while bills increasing the benefits again are currently moving through Congress.

The Legion has donated millions of dollars to America's Korean and World War II memorials and was the single-biggest contributor (\$1.2 million) to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

An award-winning videotape, "America's Veterans," has been sent to schools across the country, introducing the sacrifices made by this nation's soldiers to a new generation. And programs like Boys State and Boys Nation, American Legion Baseball, National Oratorical Contest and Shooting Sports help veterans by developing moral and well-rounded youth.

The state of the military has changed. Warfare has changed. Veterans government agencies have changed. The maladies affecting our veterans have changed. The Legion's mission has not.

It continues to reflect the organization's vision of responding to quality-of-life needs of all veterans and their families while pushing to maintain a strong national defense.

"When Legionnaires fight for veterans benefits, we're not only fighting for the Vietnam War veteran exposed to Agent Orange or veterans who should receive medical treatment and compensation for hepatitis C," Commander Smith told Congress in September 2000. "We're also fighting for the Gulf War veteran suffering from mysterious symptoms that scientists must investigate and the Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals must treat. We continue to insist on improving the availability of long-term care for aging veterans.

"When Legionnaires fight for military quality-of-life improvements, we're not only fighting for the military retiree whose promise of free, lifetime health care was broken by Uncle Sam. We're fighting for better pay, allowances, equipment, training and medical care for today's armed forces." □

*Steve Brooks is the editor of The American Legion Dispatch.*

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# The GI GAP

*A proud military that stands apart is what holds America together.*

BY GEORGE WILL

AMERICANS are often told of dangers of the large and growing gap between our military and civilian societies. Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said recently, "It is a fundamental proposition that armed services can truly serve a democracy *only* if they are a reflection of that society and are impacted by the same social trends." A former secretary of the Navy said something very similar. "As American society changes," he said, "the naval service changes with it. That's not bad. That's the way it's supposed to be."

Yet this gap must exist in any society, especially in a democratic society. Such a gap is healthy because the military must serve as an exemplar of certain virtues that will, at any given time, seem anachronistic to the society at large. And while the American

society becomes more individualistic and more self-absorbed, it becomes increasingly important that the gap between the military and society remain substantial.

Our nation just went through a very interesting presidential election. It was said by many that it was bitter and divisive. That was not bitter.

One hundred and fifty years ago, our nation argued about slavery.

Fifty years ago, the names in American politics were Douglas MacArthur, Joe McCarthy, Alger Hiss, and Julius and Ethel Rosenberg.

Thirty-five years ago, we argued over whether African-Americans should be allowed to vote and to eat in restaurants.

Thirty years ago, we argued about a ground war of attrition in the mainland of Asia.

Twenty years ago, a man who described the Soviet Union as an "evil empire" was inaugurated

**Above left:** Air Force troops stand at attention during an honor review at Fort Myer, Va. *DoD*

**Above right:** A flag with a marijuana leaf stands out in a crowd attending the 25th anniversary Woodstock concert in 1994. *corbis*

president, replacing a man whose secretary of state said Leonid Brezhnev "shares our dreams and aspirations."

Those were all bitter and divisive politics. There is no bitterness to speak of in America today. There is only an *astonishingly* low pain threshold. Three recent examples might help to illustrate this point.

The papers reported that the past Christmas retailing season was disappointing. Christmas sales last season were slightly better than last year, and last year's Christmas season was the best in 10 years.

Stock analysts said 2000 was Nasdaq's worst year in its 29-year

history, after which Nasdaq was still 16 percent higher than it was two years ago.

Last summer our economy experienced a slight uptick in the price of a gallon of gasoline. Why, at one point, the price of gasoline in America soared to about 40 percent of what it is in Europe. This is a country that is spoiled ... badly.

This is a country in which the number of households with a net worth of \$1 million has doubled over the last five years. One in 14 American households now has a net worth of \$1 million. Consider the changes this country has gone through.

In 1939, when the clouds of war began lowering over Europe, Congress passed conscription stipulating the physical requirements for the armed services. Among them were that young men had to be a minimum of five feet tall, weigh a minimum of 105 pounds and have 12 of their original complement of 32 teeth — a commentary on nutrition and dentistry during the Depression era.

As recently as 1951, many Americans lived in homes with outdoor plumbing. As recently as 1975, 80 percent of the American people had never, not once, traveled by air. In 1975, an IBM mainframe computer cost \$3.4 million. A \$1,500 laptop is about 1,000 times more powerful.

If there had been a comparable improvement in the price and performance of automobiles, a typical car today would cost \$2 and would go 6,000 miles on a thimbleful of gasoline.

Think of the changes in health care over the last century. It has been commonly said, and not untruly, that it was not until 1910 that the average visit to a doctor did more good than harm. At that time, Oliver Wendell Holmes, the great Supreme Court justice, said, "I firmly believe that if the whole *materia medica* could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be all the better for mankind and all the worse for the fishes."

At the turn of the last century, one in four American children died before age 14. If your child got diabetes, you watched the child go blind and die.

Conversely, Americans now live in a wonderful, wonderful time to

*"We are developing a society that is strange to the military and the military is strange to it. The fact is, very intelligent, prudent and sober men and women now look at the world and see a coming clash of civilizations."*

be alive and yet we use our leisure time to complain. One might think we would have learned from the terrors of the last century not to complain, but not to be complacent about the world in which we live, a world that holds a good many terrors and furies worse than the high price for a gallon of gasoline.

In 1910, 40 years after the Franco-Prussian War, Norman Angell's "The Great Illusion" became an international best seller, one of the first such. The book's thesis was that the "great illusion" — which is now recognized as an illusion itself — was that nations could not benefit from war. Therefore, there would never ever be another war.

David Jordan, then-president of Stanford University, said, "The great war of Europe, ever threatening ... will never come .... The bankers will not find the money for such a fight, the industries will not maintain it, the statesmen cannot .... There will be no general war." Jordan said that in 1913, one year before the Guns of August that began a 30-year European war.

Today there are similar predictions of eternal peace. Against such claims, some people must stand and say that great nations are always living in war or interwar years.

**A Dangerous Place.** We are a nation that must be constantly reminded of what George Orwell once said: "We sleep safe in our beds because rough men stand ready in the night to visit violence on those who would do us harm." However, we do not like to hear that. We are a pacific nation conditioned by two peaceful neighbors and by the broad oceans between us and dangers. All the more reason to be reminded that the world remains a dangerous place.

A recent poll showed 32 percent of the men and 55 percent of the women in the Army disagreed with the Army's focus on war

fighting — a perfect example of what happens when very few people in a society have experience with the military.

At one point during the last administration, we had a president, a director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a secretary of defense, a secretary of state and a national security adviser — all five with zero military experience. There are fewer and fewer veterans in Congress today. The veterans of our foreign conflicts are aging. The average World War II veteran is about 78, and scores of those veterans die everyday. The average age of a Korean veteran is 68, and the average Vietnam veteran is 53.

We are developing a society that is strange to the military, and the military is strange to it. The fact is, very intelligent, prudent and sober men and women now look at the world and see a coming clash of civilizations. They see that what Marx predicted, which was that *all* the post-industrial forces in the world, particularly religion and ethnicity, would lose their salience in the modern world. Marx, as usual, was 100 percent wrong. Religion and ethnicity convulsed the world almost more than ever before.

This time, the clashes will be well-armed with weapons of mass destruction, which means it is dangerous for a country like ours to have an extremely low pain threshold, an extremely sentimental view of the relations between nations, an extremely delusional view of the dangers of the world being drained away and an extraordinary squeamishness with regard to the fact that the military exists to engage in violence. That is particularly important in an age of graphic journalism.

Sept. 17, 1862, is to this day the bloodiest day in American history. A few days after the Battle of Antietam, a couple of men

*"Lincoln said, 'God must have loved the common man, he made so many of them.' But it is uncommon men and women who, when nations get in danger, as they invariably do, must come to the fore and lead."*

walked across the field carrying what was at that time a strange device. It was a camera, and these men were from the Mathew Brady Studio in New York. After recording what they saw on that field in northern Maryland, they returned to New York and put on an exhibit called "The Dead of Antietam." The nation was never quite the same. The war had been a distant thing and suddenly graphic journalism introduced society to the reality of war.

During the entire four years of the First World War, the worst carnage the world had ever seen, not one photograph of a dead British, French or German soldier appeared in a British, French or German newspaper. It was not until 1943, after a nine-month delay by the War Department — as it then was called — that *Life* magazine published the first photograph of a dead American soldier. Vietnam, as it is well known, was the first televised war, and it was not a good experience.

Now our rule is that — call it the "Colin Powell Doctrine" — the only time the United States should use its military is when it can be over quickly. This does not bode well for a country dealing with a still dangerous world. The problem is that there are aspects of democracy — systemic problems with a society organized around the premises of democracy — that tend to make it soft.

**Democracy vs. Military.** A French officer once said, "Democracy is the best system of government yet devised, but it suffers from one grave defect. It does not encourage those military virtues on which, in an envious world, it must frequently depend for survival."

The democratic ethos has become materialist and individualistic. Our language is of "rights" talk, the constant minting of new

rights and the casting of every conflict as a collision of absolute rights. Ours is a litigious society governed by lawyers. When this year's freshman class in America's law schools graduates, we will — at last — have 1 million lawyers in this country.

Democratic society is hostile to hierarchies and authority. It is hostile to the essence of the military organization, which is why democracies are ambivalent about the very idea of leadership. In fact, the word "leader" appears in "The Federalist Papers" 11 times. It was considered a derogatory term.

Democracies tend to think leaders are bad things because they reflect poorly on the people who should be led. Lincoln said, "God must have loved the common man, he made so many of them." But it is *uncommon* men and women who, when nations get in danger, as they invariably do, must come to the fore and lead.

That is hard for society to accept when it has decided that the worst possible sin is to be judgmental. It is hard for a society to understand that when it believes that the Ten Commandments are really the "Ten Suggestions." It is hard for a society to believe that when it speaks the language of extenuation — explaining why people behave badly and why they should not be judged harshly for that.

We are becoming a society that revels in victimhood, while practicing identity politics —



**President Lincoln.** U.S. Army

people should act in politics by our ethnic or sexual group and that our group should be a grievance group explaining why we are victims and why we are owed something.

Some believe the danger our society faces is that Americans will begin to feel that some Americans are morally superior to others. Well, the truth of the matter is some Americans *are* morally superior to others and, frankly, that is why we have military academies. Academies train young men and women to be leaders and to exercise judgment. They train men and women to be more than individualists and to acquire a moral superiority.

It is a good habit of our society to recognize excellence, sports being an example, yet we have to recognize it elsewhere as well. What military academies try to do is produce men and women who want to be the standard of excellence and virtues.

There are some very good signs that America is *hungry* for what such academies specialize in. America is hungry for honor, for sacrifice, for something larger than individualism and materialism. Consider the reception given



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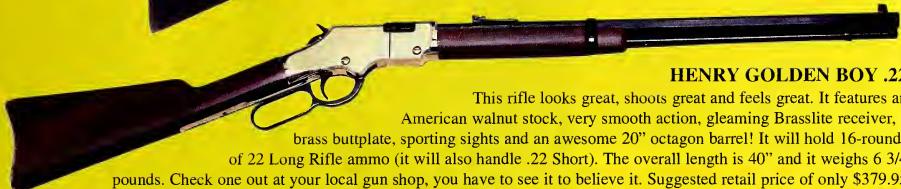
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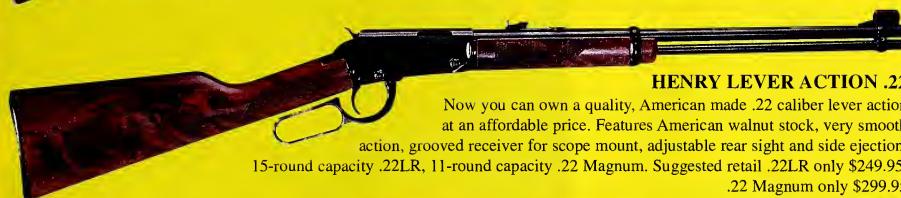
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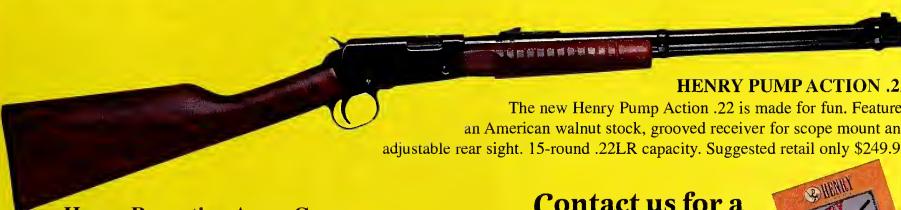
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There is a palpable hunger, and that hunger is healthy. In its heart of hearts, this nation knows how much it has depended upon its military in the past, and will do so one day again. And how much, even in peacetime, it depends on the military to keep the peace and to deter the envious and the aggressive. We as a nation know that our society must be leavened by the small numbers in the military who hold up a sense of honor for our country.

**Military Virtues.** In a time not hospitable to the military virtues, a time not hospitable to identifying virtues, one should remember a story told by a foreign diplomat who had occasion to visit the U.S. Embassy in his country:

"I arrived a quarter to six, after official office hours, and was met by the Marine on guard at the entrance to the chancery. He asked me if I would mind waiting while he lowered the two American flags at the embassy. What I witnessed over the next 10 minutes so impressed me that I am now led to make this occurrence a part of any ongoing record of this distressing era.

"The Marine was dressed in a uniform, which was spotless and neat. He walked with a measured tread from the entrance of the chancery to the stainless steel flagpole before the embassy. Almost reverently, he lowered the flag to the level of his reach where he began to fold it in a military fashion.

"He then released the flag from the clasp attached to it, stepped back from the pole, and made an about-face. He carried the flag between his hands, one above, one below, and placed it securely on a stand before the chancery. He then marched over to the second flagpole and repeated the same lonesome ceremony.

"After completing his task, he apologized for the delay, out of pure courtesy, as noth-

*"At one point during the last administration, we had a president, a director of the Central Intelligence Agency, a secretary of defense, a secretary of state and a national security adviser — all five with zero military experience."*



**Commander of Troops Col. Thomas M. Jordan escorts President Clinton as he inspects the ceremonial honor guard during a farewell at Fort Myer, Va., on Jan. 5, 2001. DoD**

ing less than incapacity would have prevented him from completing that task, the simplicity of which made the might, the power and the glory of the United States of America stand forth in a way that a mighty wave of a military aircraft or the passage of a super carrier, or a parade of 10,000 men and women, could never have made manifest.

"We all should be so fortunate to visit one of our embassies in a faraway place

and to see a soldier fold our flag and turn to a stranger and say, 'I am sorry for the delay, sir. I had to honor my country.'" □

*George Will, a Pulitzer Prize-winning nationally syndicated columnist, is author of "Bunts: Curt Flood, Camden Yards, Pete Rose and Other Reflections on Baseball." He also is a panelist on ABC's "This Week with Sam Donaldson and Cokie Roberts."*

*Article design: Doug Rollison*

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# Memorial TO A Generation



*Nation owes  
tribute to the  
men and women  
who saved  
the world.*

BY ALAN W. DOWD

**T**HE generation which is going off stage," wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1799, "has arrested the course of despotism, which has overwhelmed the world for thousands and thousands of years."

Jefferson's reflection on the men and women who forged this nation could just as well have been written today, as construction of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., nears reality. In erecting this monument, the country is finally paying tribute in granite and bronze to the generation of Americans who rose to defend freedom in its darkest hour.

**A Long Shadow.** If you believe, as Jefferson did, that people

Seabees of the 50th Battalion sitting on sandbags in a canvas chapel, bow their heads in prayer during a 1944 Christmas Eve candlelight service, at Tinian, Mariana Islands.

shape history – not the other way around – then it's difficult to call the men and women who fought World War II anything but "the greatest generation." Even though most of them have passed away and those who survive are in their 70s and 80s, we still live in their shadow. And it may always be that way. What they did on the field of battle is matched only by what they achieved in peace.

"Since this country was founded," observed John F. Kennedy, the first member of the World War II generation to serve as president, "each generation of Americans has been summoned

to give testimony to its national loyalty." No generation before or since was summoned so often or answered so resolutely as his.

Raised during the Depression, they had to grow up fast. Many of them didn't know the carefree days of childhood. Instead, they worked. They watched worry and strain crush their mothers. They watched dust storms and stock-market crashes humble their fathers, impoverish their families and dash their own dreams of independence.

Then, as the Depression receded and adulthood arrived, the world staggered back to war. The World War II generation wouldn't be granted the luxury of contemplating what to do after high school – "finding yourself" wasn't an option. The country called, and the generation that grew up too fast marched off to Africa and Europe and the Pacific's mosaic of islands and reefs, dutifully paying in blood for another generation's mistakes.

At home, the wives and sweethearts and sisters of America's fighting men formed their own army – 14.1 million strong – that fueled America's war factories. They would be as critical to the war effort as the men in uniform. As British Gen. J.F.C. Fuller said, "For the first time in the history of war, battles were as much tussles between competing factories as between contending armies."

In 1938, the United States had virtually no defense industries. By 1943, America's wartime industries were churning out two times as many weapons as Germany and Japan combined. The productive capacity was nothing less than jaw-dropping – 24,000 tanks in a single year, 4,000 planes a month, a new ship every 10.3 hours!

America and the world are lucky these twin tasks of war-fighting and arsenal-building didn't fall to another generation. In 1998, Americans could barely sit through the film "Saving Private Ryan," a pale imitation of the hell my grandfathers endured on D-Day. Merely living through the war is truly unimaginable a half-century later.

The war scarred nearly every continent. At its height, 110 mil-

*"As young men, they liberated Africa, Europe and Asia, dutifully paying in blood for another generation's mistakes. America and the world are lucky this task didn't fall to someone else."*

lion people took up arms; 16 million of them were Americans. All told, 61 million people died during the war; more than half of them were civilians. And 407,318 Americans never returned from the front. Only the Civil War claimed more of America's sons.

The individual battles and invasions are no less sobering. About 9,000 Allies were killed in a matter of hours taking back Normandy. Some 200,000 people died on Okinawa alone. A million men fought in the Battle of the Bulge. In just 30 days, it claimed 70,000 Americans – more than the number that died during the nine years of Vietnam.

A 1944 issue of *Time* magazine provides a window on the carnage. The Allied soldier, wrote *Time*, "died in Tunis, on Tarawa, at Salerno, on the blood-soaked fields around Kiev. He lost his face, his limbs and his mind before flamethrowers, in the cockpits of blazing planes, in the insane shadows of the jungle."

The war and its carnage mercifully ended at Rheim and on the USS *Missouri*, but the world was only half-free. As world war gave way to cold war, the veterans of Normandy and Iwo Jima were summoned again – this time "to bear the burden of a long, twilight struggle," in the stirring words of Kennedy's inaugural. Without protest or dissent, they humbly accepted the challenge. They saw this return to duty not as a chore, but as a privilege. "I do not believe that any of us would exchange places with any other generation," the young president intoned, giving voice to the generation that had vanquished fascism and rescued freedom.

Drafted into that struggle for freedom as teen-agers and 20-somethings, they made a conscious decision to continue it as adults. And again it is our good fortune that the decision was left to them rather than someone else. Their willingness to serve and sacrifice again grew from a patriotism that many of their children would scorn and many more of their grandchildren would never understand.

With their blood and sweat and treasure and ingenuity, they built what came to be called "The American Century," an era when America finally accepted the mantle of global leadership it had so often refused – an era that has yet to close.

They entered middle-age hold-



Pleased over their victory during the Marshall Islands attack, pilots grin across the tail of an F6F Hellcat on board the USS Lexington. Seventeen of 20 Japanese planes heading for Tarawa were downed during the battle in November 1943. *Dod*

ing back Moscow's Iron Curtain. And as their hair turned silver, they fittingly tore down that curtain and liberated the other half of Europe. Never forget that the Berlin Wall came down and the Soviet Union collapsed while one of their own sat in the Oval Office. Unlike their elders, they would not leave their unfinished business to another generation.

**Better Late Than Never.** For these and so many other reasons, this memorial is theirs. And the recognition it brings is long overdue.

As Rep. Marcy Kaptur, D-Ohio, notes, "This generation of Americans never asked America for anything. It is now time for us to honor their life of contributions." In fact, time is quickly running out: Only 6 million men and women from the World War II generation are alive today. They are dying at a rate of more than 1,100 per day. By the time the memorial is complete, more than a million more will be gone.

But America is racing to set things right. States, cities, corporations, The American Legion and its posts, and even school children have chipped in \$92 million in support of the \$100 million memorial. Spearheaded by World War II veteran Bob Dole, the massive fund-raising campaign includes not a penny in federal tax dollars — American servicemen wade from Coast Guard landing craft, through a shallow surf, to the beach of Tinian Island in July, 1944. Navy warships, transports and LSTs stand on the horizon. *DoD*

*"The World War II generation wouldn't be granted the luxury of contemplating what to do after high school — finding yourself wasn't an option."*

something Dole is deeply proud of. Throughout his stewardship of the fundraising drive, Dole adamantly opposed efforts in Congress to appropriate money for the memorial.

"If we can win World War II," he said during last year's Legion Washington Conference, "we certainly can raise \$100 million in the private sector."

The donations will be well spent. Nestled between the Lincoln Memorial and Washington Monument, the new memorial will set on the National Mall. Together, the trio of monuments will call to mind the most critical moments in American history — the founding and revolution represented by Washington, the internal struggle over slavery represented by Lincoln and the defeat of fascism represented by World War II.

Hailed as "elegantly simple," Friedrich St. Florian's design includes a "Light of Freedom" rising from the Mall's Reflecting Pool; 56 pillars evoking the wartime unity of America's states and territories; and a "Freedom Wall," which according to the memorial's planners will recognize "the sacrifice of America's World War II generation, the contribution of our Allies and the suf-

ferring of all humankind."

Some wonder why it took so long to build a World War II memorial. It wasn't until 1987, when Kaptur introduced legislation clearing the way for the memorial, that the idea even got a second thought on Capitol Hill. And another decade would pass before the memorial cleared the usual bureaucratic and legislative hurdles. And so the question remains: Why did more than half a century pass before we honored the sacrifice of those who fell and the lives of those who survived?

The answer may be as simple as the character of the men and women who comprise the World War II generation: They are humble, too humble to demand recognition for what they accomplished in 1945; too humble to whine about the years and limbs they left on foreign shores; too humble to obsess over the nightmares they brought back. They saw what they did and kept doing as a duty, not a choice. Embodying that humility and sense of service, Dole himself has argued, "This memorial is not for us — it's for those who come after us."

In typical fashion, Dole's generation of reluctant heroes, the generation that saved the world, shuns the spotlight again — even as the stage empties for their curtain call. □

*Alan W. Dowd is a frequent contributor to The American Legion Magazine.*

*Article design: Holly K. Soria*



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Yes Sir, that's my Uncle Fran of World War II Watch fame. "Unc" passed away peacefully, painlessly, and with honor January 27, 1999 to rest in peace here in Phoenix at Veteran's Memorial Cemetery. I miss the man more than words can explain. He has left me a home full of treasures from his great generation. A generation of patriots, true heroes, real men.



Digging through dusty old boxes you find a life time of memories. An original pair of German field glasses, a Luger pistol (source unknown), Army ribbons, Uncle Fran's original Army hat from the photo above. And, an old tattered wallet with a 1935 series \$2 bill and four original black and white photos of "Unc" with his friends in the trenches of Germany. To say the least, it is difficult to sort through. It is in Uncle Fran's memory we have recreated the original wallet, and we have customized it with your choice of Military Insignia.



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# He Got Mail

BY JEFF STOFFER

FIVE years ago, Andrew Carroll's understanding of the war experience matched his enthusiasm for history textbooks. Not much there.

To Carroll, a self-proclaimed member of Generation X, war was a Baghdad fireworks show he watched on CNN during the winter of 1991. "My concept of it was sort of like an enormous video game," he says.

Then, in 1998 – almost on a lark – Carroll issued a bulletin asking people to send him their personal war correspondences. The plea appeared in a special Veterans Day "Dear Abby" column, and the next thing Carroll knew, he was picking up mail by the carloads. More than 50,000 submissions poured in, penned by generals and foot soldiers alike, from the Civil War to Bosnia.

He gave it a name, The Legacy Project, and spent the next three years burrowing through the stacks, reading, photocopying, contacting families and verifying details from his office in Washington. "It wasn't until I dove into this project that I got a sense of the true horror of it all," says Carroll, a 31-year-old author and epistolary historian.

The mountain of mail was whittled down to 200 letters published by Scribner last spring in a collection titled, "War Letters: Extraordinary Correspondence from American Wars." An Internet presence – warletters.com – followed the book last summer, offering free access to even more missives, along with information about museums, archives and tips on how to properly preserve important family papers.

In June, the book hit No. 10 for nonfiction on the New York Times Bestseller List, and in November PBS plans to air a Veterans Day version of the collection with celebrity readers. Among the prominent voice-overs on the audio version

of the book are Joan Allen, Tom Brokaw and Noah Wyle of "ER."

In respect and gratitude to the families and veterans who supplied him, Carroll won't accept personal pay from the book. All his earnings are being donated to veterans service organizations, including The American Legion. "I think it is important for my generation to step up to the plate and start doing more to support veterans services," says Carroll, whose initial contributions to The American Legion have gone to the Child Welfare Foundation and The American Legion Endowment Fund.

What Carroll discovered in those letters changed his life:

■ A 15-year-old Marine recruit who lied about his age to get into boot camp in 1941 begs his mother to "tell them the truth about my age and get me out of here ... if you only knew how I feel you would not wait to get me out." The editor's endnote punctuates the story with the young private's death three years later in the Pacific Theater.

■ The notoriously stern Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing writes a sensitive letter to his 9-year-old son, Warren, about why he and U.S.

'Dear Abby' plea for war letters gave Andrew Carroll more than a history lesson.

The following are excerpts from letters collected by Andrew Carroll and published by Scribner in "War Letters: Extraordinary Correspondence from American Wars." Colloquial language and original punctuation are retained.



Conor O'Sullivan received a 7th birthday gift he'll always treasure and a letter from his dad in Bosnia. Courtesy Tom O'Sullivan

## Happy Birthday from Bosnia

Dear Conor,

There aren't any stores here in Bosnia, so I couldn't buy you any toys or souvenirs for your birthday. What I am sending you is something very special, though. It is a flag. This flag represents America and makes me proud each time I see it. When the people here in Bosnia see it on our uniforms, on our vehicles, or flying above our camps, they know that it represents freedom, and, for them, peace after many years of war. Sometimes, this flag is even more important to them than it is to people who live in America because some Americans don't know much about the sacrifices it represents or the peace it has brought to places like Bosnia.

This flag was flown on the flag-pole over the headquarters of Task Force 4-67 Armor, Camp Colt, in the Posavina Corridor of northern Bosnia-Herzegovina, on 16 September 1996. It was flown in honor of you on your seventh birthday. Keep it and honor it always.

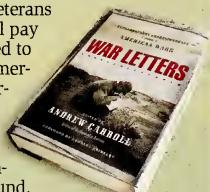
– Love,  
Dad

The letter above was written by 36-year-old Maj. Tom O'Sullivan, officer in charge of the 1st Armored Division Assault Command Post and, later, operations officer of the 4th Battalion, 67th Armor at Camp Colt, Bosnia.

## From a loving and living husband

Dear Wife,

I this day received an issue of the *Star and Times* containing the following paragraphs which no doubt overwhelmed me as much as it cer-







**Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing reviews troops in 1919.** National Archives

1945, to write his parents from Adolf Hitler's apartment, on the führer's own swastika-embossed stationery, following the allied invasion of Munich. Hitler was dead three days when Evers wrote about the hatred he felt for Nazi Germany, especially after helping liberate the concentration camp Dachau. "In two years of combat you can imagine I have seen a lot of death, furious deaths mostly. But nothing has ever stirred me as much as this."

Authors in "War Letters" include prisoners of war, spies, lonely husbands, Americans accused of communist ties, proud new fathers, presidents and privates. Among the bigger names are Presidents Theodore Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower, John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, and George Bush; Gens. William Sherman, George Custer, Douglas MacArthur, George Patton, Colin Powell and Norman Schwarzkopf; and Civil War nurse Clara Barton, convicted spy Alger Hiss, Capt. Richard Hornberger, M.D. (who wrote the book "M\*A\*S\*H" under the pen name Richard Hooker) and Julia "The French Chef" Child.

Published for the first time, most of the letters emerged from the cedar chests, Bibles and trunks of family members. One bundle turned up at a yard sale, marked \$1. Others were respectfully submitted, like the historic artifacts they are, from the heirs of great American leaders. Since the book was published, thousands more have arrived in Carroll's mail. They are still being accepted, with submission information available on the Web site. Carroll says he is especially interested in gathering letters from multiple-generation military families.

"It is overwhelming," says Carroll, whose day job is directing a non-profit literacy corporation for young people. "All these names, dates and facts - the history came alive. I heard the individual voices."

Carroll took up the avocation of letter collecting, preservation and publication after his house burned down in 1989. Everything else was replaceable, except his personal papers. "That's what really jarred me," he says. "I realized how wonderful letters were and the tangible quality they have."

After authoring two books on volunteerism, Carroll's first act of epistolary history came with "Letters of a Nation," published by Kodansha in 1997 and Broadway (soft cover) in 1999. A broad-ranged guide to great American letters," says Carroll, that anthology included a war-letters chapter that led him to ask "Dear Abby" for more.

"People said they threw their letters away," Carroll says. "These were American heroes, and somehow they didn't realize it. They were so humble."

The Legacy Project occupied nearly all of Carroll's conscious hours for a year and a half. "Thank God I'm doing something I love," he says. And the project is far from complete. He is touring the United States on a campaign to "Save America's Letters" and is building interest in the new Web site, certain that if he does not act urgently more of "this nation's great undiscovered literature" will be lost forever. □

*Jeff Stoffer is managing editor of The American Legion Magazine.*

troops were fighting in Europe. "I want you to know while you are still a boy some of the fine patriotism that inspires the American soldiers who are fighting over here for the cause of liberty ..." he writes from France. The letter is dated Oct. 10, 1918, three years after Pershing's wife and three young daughters were killed in a fire in San Francisco, leaving only the boy.

■ Staff Sgt. Horace Evers takes a moment on May 2,

tainly must have done you. "To be shot: Francis Christiance deserter from the ranks of Capt. Truax's Company, one which we have known for a long time was sentenced to be shot and perhaps met his faith at noon to-day. We have not given this fact publicity before, we did hope for and do not yet despair of a reprieve for the misguided soldier though the fact that this terrible punishment is meted for a second offense seems to abide it —"

I simply deny each and every specification contained in the above.

1st. I am not shot.

2nd. I am not sentenced to be shot.

3rd. There has not been here the slightest supposition among the men or myself that I was to be shot.

4th. I never deserted from Capt. Truax's Company nor have I ever been tried for any charge for desertion. From whence these false assertions could have originated I can not surmise.

This afternoon Col. Jackson has received a letter requesting the transmission of my dead body to my wife, my feeling may better be imagined than described. The editor of the Star certainly should bear a great deal of the blame for publishing a rumor leaving a whole family on the foundation of what must have been a mere rumor ...

— Truly your loving  
and yet living husband,  
Francis Christiance

*The letter above was dated Oct. 7, 1861, after Union Pvt. Francis Christiance was mortified to read in the newspaper erroneous charges of his desertion.*

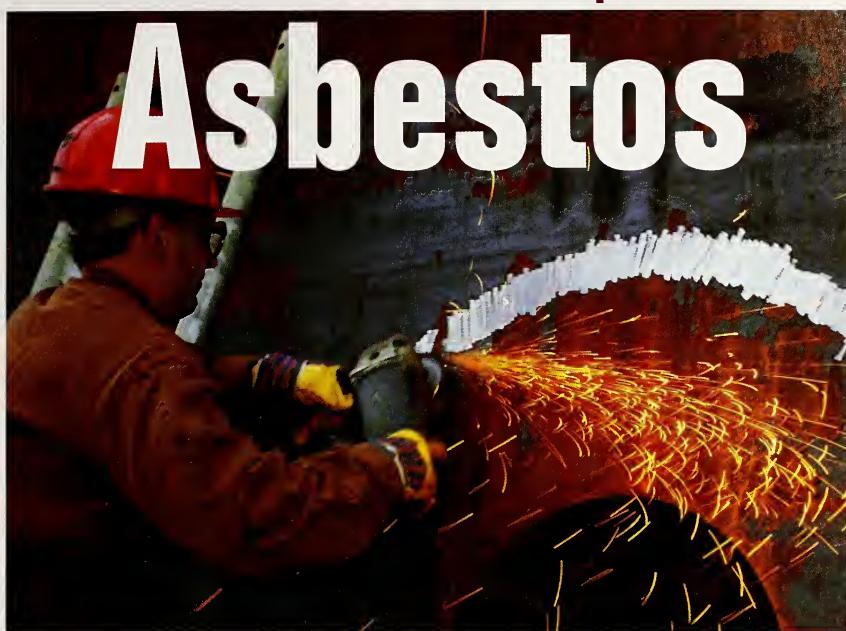
### **Going hand to hand**

Dear Father, Mother & brothers, This is the first chance I have had to write to you in over a week. We have just come back from the front where our division took part in holding back the Germans in one of their biggest drives of the war. This is the first German offensive which failed to make any gains and our boys not only held them back but counter attacked in several places ...

... I'll never forget some of the sights I saw and how bravely our men and the French bore their wounds. Men with arms and legs torn off would never utter a groan

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during the whole trip to the hospital. At one place some new batteries came up and their horses were picketed in a clump of trees. I saw a shell land in the middle of them and the next minute there was a pile of 50 or 60 dead horses. The roads too were littered with dead horses and mules and overturned kitchens and supply wagons.

But as heavy as the German barrage was our boys held firm and our artillery sent back two for every one that came over. German prisoners said our artillery did horrible execution among their line troops and we know they were piled high in "no man's land" ...

The Germans call us barbarians, they don't like the way we fight. When the boys go over the top or make raids they generally throw away their rifles and go to it with trench knives, sawed off shot guns, bare fists and hand grenades, and the Bosch doesn't like that kind of fighting. The boys from Alabama are particularly expert with knives and they usually go over hollering like fiends - so I don't blame the Germans for being afraid of them. At hand to hand fighting the Bosch is no match for our boys and any American soldier will tell you he can lick any two Dutchmen. Where the Germans shine is with their artillery and air service ...

- With love to all,  
George

*In a letter to his family in New Jersey during the spring of 1918, the above words of ambulance corps driver George Ruckle illuminate the patriotic resolve of outnumbered Americans, French and British forces trying to save Paris from German overthrow.*

### Keeping Tojo alive long enough to kill him

(12:00 Noon)

12 Sept. 45

Dear Mom & Dad:

I don't imagine you could ever guess where I am as I write this letter. At present, I'm sitting in a chair about 3 ft. from the bedside of the ex-Premier of Japan - Hideki Tojo. We were in duty last night, in surgery - when he arrived at approximately 9:40 P.M. - & I've never seen so much "brass," correspondents, & photographers in my life ... when Capt. Speelberger (attending physician) shoved the

stethoscope in my hand & said to check him every 5 minutes, I didn't know whether to "sh - or wind my watch." Ha!

As there was no whole blood available at the moment, we gave him 600 cc. of blood plasma after which he perked up enough to make a statement. He told Gen. Eichelberger (thru the interpreter) that he was sorry to cause so much trouble. He had planned on shooting himself in the head, but had been afraid it would muss up his face too much - so had decided on the heart. He used a 38 Cal. automatic, and the bullet entered just below & medial to the left breast & emerged from the back about two inches higher. I'm damned if I know how it missed his heart.

1:15 P.M.

Two nurses just arrived ... Everyone is pretty well gripped at this - as after 18 months over here, taking care of about every type of case imaginable without nurses - they sent in some expressly for the purpose of taking care of Tojo!

2:25 P.M.

Blood transfusion started. It will take about an hour. So far he has shown very little improvement ... The photographers have just left.

3:40 P.M.

Tojo is resting quietly & the color is coming back a little. In a way I hope that he recovers, so that he can stand trial & be executed the proper way. I believe if he died now, the Japs would have him put up as a national hero - but if we finish him off, I don't think they'll have much to say. He has admitted that he was the cause of the war - something's wrong.

4:25 P.M.

Phew, that was nice! He developed a severe chill & pain in the heart & wound from the blood given him. It was a little questionable there for awhile, but he came out of it (damnit). You know it's funny to be taking care of some one & not



**A soldier takes a quiet moment to write home during the Korean War.** National Archives photo

knowing whether you want him to live or not.

- Love,  
Bob

P.S. In my next letter, I'll send a piece of his shirt. It has blood on it - but don't wash it. Just put it away in my room.

*The above account came in a letter from Cpl. Richard S. Easterbrook to his parents, following Tojo's failed attempt at suicide. The ex-premier of Japan recovered enough to stand trial for war crimes and was hanged Dec. 23, 1948. This letter was found in a bundle sold at a yard sale.*

### The real Hawkeye Pierce

Dear Mother and Dad,

Well, except for my complexion & skin, I'm a well man. Tomorrow I'm going to shave for the first time in 10 days & go over to the 22nd Evac for a couple days before returning north.

Having nothing else to write about I will tell you more that I have learned about the adventures of A.D. ("Dud") Hall in the Orient ...

... His first night there he helped my friends Jeet & John Glynn drink up a bottle of John's scotch. At this time he met my old roommate, Jenner P. Coil (the 46-year-old Oklahoman lush of whom I once told

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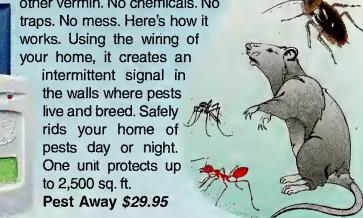
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**Pfc. Joseph Big Medicine Jr., a Cheyenne, writes a letter home from Vietnam.** National Archives photo

you). Finding that Jenner was classified by the army as a CNT man, and being an excellent judge of character, Dudley decided that Jenner was just the man to take care of the nasal polyps which were afflicting the Captain of his ship ... the Captain submitted to the tender ministrations of Jenner P. Coil (a braver man than I) while the first mate proceeded to get around a bottle generously provided by my friends.

Well, the Captain survived, and that night Jenner, Jeeter, Big John Glynn, & Cy Schwolben, my other old roommate, were guests at dinner aboard ship. Jenner, having saved the Captain's nose, was the guest of honor ... he immediately passed out as a result of before dinner refreshment. The meal proceeded uneventfully and was followed by conversation and alcohol, probably in ever increasing quantities. Finally one of the more alert noticed that Jenner P. Coil was no longer with them. A search was forthwith instituted and sometime later Jenner was found in the hold, draped over a pipe, sobbing, and mumbling over & over again "I am lost in the bowels of the ship."

Without knowing Jenner, you cannot fully appreciate the humor of this, altho I must admit there's a little pathos mixed in with it.

I have to laugh at the whole

thing. Dudley invariably makes a good first impression, particularly if he can impress a bunch like that by taking them aboard his ship. Just wait till he comes to Pusan and brings his whole crew up to have their appendices out; the boys may feel a little different about him then.

Well, that's the tall tale for today.  
— So long,  
Dick

*After leaving Korea, Capt. Richard Hornberger — a chest surgeon from Maine — wrote the book "M\*A\*S\*H," a fictionalized account of his wartime experiences, under the pseudonym of Richard Hooker. The above letter was written while Hornberger was recovering from the chicken pox on Feb. 17, 1952, and refers to lifelong friend Arthur Dudley Hall, who was serving in the Merchant Marines.*

### Live from Yankee Station

Hi Sue,

This letter comes to you LIVE from Yankee Station, Gulf of Tonkin. Today we finally started flying missions against North Viet Nam and in about an hour we'll stop flying for 12 hours. So far we've lost no aircraft or even had one damaged. But, this is just the first day. Two pilots from my squadron were the first to drop bombs on N.V.N. from

this carrier and they blew up a bridge. Beginners luck, I guess! My "bird" didn't fly at all today though, as they were installing a camera in it. I hope it goes up tomorrow. If you want I'll dedicate a bomb to you and Terri. You should see some of the things the guys write on the bombs. Its really funny. Here's a few that I can think of. FROM THE V.C. FOR LUNCH BUNCH; NO DEPOSIT NO RETURN; IF YOU CAN READ ENGLISH CHARLIE HA HA!; ITS WHATS UP FRONT THAT COUNTS; MAKE WAR NOT LOVE; CHARLIE KILLER; MERRY CHRISTMAS HO; TO HO WITH LOVE; DO NOT DROP ON THE FLIGHT DECK ... of course there are a few I can't print ...

... Ya know Sue, the night before we pulled out of the Philippines to leave for Yankee Station some guys and I went to the club for a couple (80 or 90) drinks. Well, as you probably know there are guys from all over the USA and as it always happens the band would play DIXIE and all the guys from the south would start singing and yelling and cursing the Yankees from the north and the same thing would happen when the band would play Yankee Doodle only we got up. But as soon as that band started to play God Bless America, everyone, no matter where they were from, just stood up and started to sing. It was really great. It made me feel real good. I wish the people back home could have seen it.

I imagine a lot of them would say it was a bunch of drunken sailors that didn't even know what they were singing. But it wasn't that way at all. It was a bunch of guys that are proud of their country and will fight and die if necessary for it. That's a lot more than I can say for some people in our country. Now, it may seem like I copied this out of books or something but I didn't and its just as it really happened and that's how I feel.

*The final page of the above letter, by Airman 3rd Class Robert Zwerlein on July 25, 1967, is missing. Four days after the letter was dated, a sudden electrical charge launched a six-foot Zuni missile from a stationary fighter jet on the deck of the USS Forrestal. The missile struck a fuel tank and caused a chain reaction of explosions, killing 134, including Zwerlein. □*

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# PEACEKEEPING WAR OF THE FUTURE



*Do today's missions offer a glimpse of tomorrow's warfare?*

BY GEORGIE ANNE GEYER

IT had been a bad week in the little northern Kosovo city of Mitrovica. That's saying a lot, given the town's recent history. I could feel a sense of threat the minute I left the capital city of Pristina on the seedy, narrow, crowded road north, toward "enemy" Serbia.

A tense torpor hung over the countryside and reflected the mood of NATO's efforts over the last two years to keep the peace. Ten minutes on the road, my taxi driver and I found our trip halted when a bus veered off the road after being hit head-on. We waited two and a half hours.

Anti-Serbian riots had rocked Mitrovica the first week of January 2001, most of them on the

Polish, Ukrainian and American soldiers unload boxes of clothing from a U.S. Army CH-47 Chinook helicopter near the village of Drenova Glava, Kosovo, in February 2001. The donated clothing was flown to the isolated village by Company F, 159th Army Aviation because the impassable roads challenged KFOR vehicles. KFOR is the NATO-led, international military force in Kosovo on the peace-keeping mission known as Operation Joint Guardian. *DoD*

increasingly famous bridge at Mitrovica. Thirty-five NATO peacekeepers were wounded, some seriously, as Serbs and Albanians fought with everything from stones to grenades to Molotov cocktails. Divided neatly by the deceptively calm River Ibar into Serb Mitrovica on the north



**Spc. Jerry Qualley of the North Dakota Army National Guard, hands out coloring-book pages to students in a schoolhouse in an Albanian village near Vitina, Kosovo, in May 2000. Qualley and his fellow soldiers delivered boxes of clothing and school supplies donated to the kids in this small village by the soldiers' families and churches back home. *DOD***

and Albanian Mitrovica on the south, the old city – once graceful – was exploding.

More and more, Mitrovica was coming to symbolize all the defects and dangers of peacekeeping in the Balkans.

By mid-afternoon, after five full hours in which we actually drove a mere 30 miles, we finally arrived at this strange, modern-day battlefield. Soon, I was sitting in the utilitarian offices of top U.N. officials, looking out at a rather ugly pontoon bridge with men in various stages of uniform standing at both ends, like mean, stubborn dogs protecting their turf.

In his office as head peacekeeper there, retired British Brig. Gen. Anthony Welch explained the threatening situation to me. "There's no place in Kosovo where it's so in-your-face as here," he began, noticeably exasperated. "The River Ibar is literally and figuratively the fault line between the two Kosovos. Because these two plates rub up against each other, anything that happens gives us a seismic shock. Inevitably, this is where it's going to happen."

Indeed, this day the once-pretty town bristled with NATO peacekeeping troops, known in Kosovo

as KFOR. Even American troops – who seldom left their zone or their extraordinary \$67 million Camp Bondsteel on a looming mountain-top in the south – lined the scrofulous old streets in their tanks.

Welch explained to me the continuous and continued standoff on the bridge was his major problem. But he had others, most of them with the military setup there.

"You overlay all of this," he said, pointing out the window, "with the inevitable problems of international peacekeeping. Like it or not, we don't stay here very long. In many ways, Belfast was easier for the Brits because we were there for a long time – we were able to get intelligence on the parties to the conflict.

"But KFOR changes here every four months. At this moment, for instance, the KFOR commander has been here for 15 days – and for seven days out of that, his troops have been in action. So this is a difficult place to police and to administer." He shrugged. "It is also a difficult place for people to live."

I stayed that afternoon until it began to get dark. Then we drove back to Pristina. This time it took 25 minutes. After all the drama that week, there was no violence on Saturday. In fact, in the

months to come, nothing changed in Mitrovica. Nothing was resolved, and no one was quite sure what "peacekeeping" in the Balkans – or for that matter anywhere else – was supposed to do.

To understand the crucial importance of peacekeeping in the 12 to 15 years since the end of the Cold War, and more, to grasp the task of American soldiers in this new form of peace-loving "warfare," one has to begin by looking at what happened in the corridors of the United Nations. Without most Americans knowing it, the responsibility for policing the new ethnic wars and civil wars of this era was being massively and dramatically shifted from the disciplined, accountable and vertically-structured regular armies of the great powers to the undisciplined, unaccountable and horizontally structured bureaucracies of the United Nations.

Overnight, U.N. peacekeeping became the predominant form of



**Spc. William Call drives down stakes for concertina wire with the help of Sgt. Daniel Racicot, left, and Sgt. 1st Class Joe Contreras, right, near Glamoc, Bosnia-Herzegovina, during a live-fire exercise in support of Operation Joint Endeavor in May 1996. *DOD***

military action to stem conflicts from Africa to the Balkans to the South Seas. One day, the United Nations was stuck in the old rut, where the Security Council could not move on issues because of the Soviet veto. The next day, as the prominent military historian John Hillen says, "A funny thing happened to the United Nations on the way to the post-Cold War world. It became a major player in global security."

Was it outreach or overreach? Noble intention or foolishness? In 1990, 10,000 blue-helmeted peacekeeping troops were on U.N. missions; eight small operations costing approximately \$400 million. By 1993, the United Nations was running 18 such missions around the globe with some 80,000 troops under its command at the cost of some \$3.6 billion per year, with the United States paying nearly one-third of the total cost.

Yet, these complex actions were overseen, on the 38th floor of the U.N. Secretariat, by a mere handful of officers, and with little or no cooperation among the national units.

At the same time, the philosophy changed. What began as a policy of sending U.N. peacekeepers only to countries where both sides agreed to having their largely resolved conflict policed evolved into the brash new idea of sending peacekeepers right into the middle of a conflict without any real mandate to use force. Was this peacekeeping, peace enforcement or even peace building?

The U.N. tenet of "neutralism" enshrined in the charter to keep the world organization from taking sides in a particular conflict soon was clearly at the center of the problems, but the organization's leaders stubbornly held to it, even though it brought constant incoherence to these new battlefields.

"The whole philosophy of the United Nations is based on talk, negotiate and then talk again," then-Secretary Gen. Boutros Boutros-Ghali told me during an interview in his New York townhouse in June 1994. "Once we are using force, that is an expression of failure. Our strength is diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of problems. The moment you have



**Sgt. Pat Patterson watches as Bosnians rummage through a garbage can during his patrol near the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza, Bosnia, in May 1996. Patrols in the area reinforced the presence of the Implementation Force. DOD**

used force, even if in conformity with the law, you have failed."

Then the Egyptian diplomat whose name would become synonymous with the question of peacekeeping missions of the 1990s paused before adding with emphasis, "But more importantly, the member states are not ready to use force, and because the protagonists know they are not ready, that element of dissuasion does not exist. Either you fight or you negotiate. If there is no political will to fight, then what can you do?"

In fact, there was no political will in the West. The Europeans sent peacekeepers in a passive mode, and until 1999, America sent troops only in the "trip-wire" mission to Macedonia. Stationed in small outposts along the border with Serbia to prevent Serb aggression, they were widely considered to be excellent soldiers and effective in their missions.

But very soon, other U.N. missions were alarming not only critics, but the United Nations itself as peacekeepers stood by in the Bosnian village of Srebrenica while villagers were taken away by the Serbs to be slaughtered in 1995 and when the United Nations refused to act preemptively in Rwanda

before 900,000 Tutsis were killed by Hutu tribesmen. By 1999, the critique of what was effectively a problem of U.N. neutrality had taken dramatic turns. Two internal reports within the United Nations itself accused its own organization of "aiding and abetting" evil in those two peacekeeping ops.

**The United States and the American Military.** The first American peacekeepers in any numbers entered Bosnia as a result of the Dayton Accords of November 1995, pushed by President Clinton and agreed to by all of the parties involved, as a way of stabilizing Bosnia. These new Yanks, including an unusually high number of National Guard units – because the Pentagon wanted it to look as if not so many American regular troops were being sent – were based in big camps such as the one in Tuzla in the north. They made good impressions as units and as individuals, except for the fact that America had become so casualty-conscious that the troops most often stayed in their camps, handing off the necessary patrolling and the implementation of accords to other national units like the experienced Brits.



**Eighteenth Airborne Sgt. Darrell Rose, Fort Bragg, N.C., turns his mechanical expertise into assembling toys for playrooms in the Fort Dix barracks now used to house Kosovo refugees. Army**



**Spc. Curtis Ratiiff and Pfc. Allen Johnson of the 1st Armored Division sit atop a Russian BTR 80 before departing for a joint patrol in February 1996. DOD**

But in the winter of 1999, Serbs attacked Kosovo and massively and brutally attempted to expel 2 million Albanian Kosovars. That's when America really entered these new wars.

In early April that year I traveled to Mons, Belgium, to see U.S. Gen. Wesley K. Clark, the respected and intellectual

supreme allied commander in Europe. Massive NATO air strikes had already begun, and Clark was obviously exhausted, not so much by the military aspects of the job as by the political maneuvers necessary to keep 19 nations together in this new-style war.

I asked him that late Saturday afternoon: Would the whole mission work? "It's too soon to decide that it won't," he answered elliptically as we sat in his big, comfortable office at SACEUR headquarters. "It's an appropriate air campaign for NATO. It's serious, sustained, systematic, progressive."

Then this accomplished military man, first in his 1966 West Point class, who later earned a master's degree in philosophy, politics and economics from Oxford, reached back through history to stress why the NATO campaign and the unique introduction of American peacekeeping troops that would follow was so important.

"In earlier centuries, travelers from northern Europe and the obstreperous Balkans had to move through many border posts and many national entities to go from, say, Poland to Serbia or Kosovo," he said. "The Balkans were always at the peripheries of Europe, but now they are the strategic center of what we are trying to build here, and at the center of the future of Europe."

Sooner than even Clark thought, the bombing campaign worked, and – except for Mitrovica and that northern enclave still held by the Serbs – Kosovo was freed of the Serb police state. Kosovo, the "future of Europe," effectively became a U.N. protectorate until elections to determine the future of the region could be conducted.

American troops now entered in greater mass than any other peacekeeping mission, and more than 8,000 GIs were among the 38,000 NATO troops by 2001. Once again, the judgment was this: excellent troops but too isolated in their big camps, especially the huge and almost insanely commodious Camp Bondsteel in southern Kosovo. It was no accident that Albanian separatists attacked on various borders of Kosovo in Winter 2001, all the attacks were on the borders of the American zone. Because there had been so little patrolling, NATO officials were unaware of these poisonous buildups until they exploded.

The American troops comported themselves almost without incident. Most studies showed, interestingly enough, that the vast majority genuinely liked their peacekeeping missions, but also that they liked them most when they were deeply involved in them firsthand and not when they were only hanging around camp trying, above all else, to avoid casualties.

"The professionalism of American peacekeepers has been exemplary," says Charles Moskos, author of *"The Postmodern Military"* and widely considered one of the nation's premier military analysts. "Looking at morale in peacekeeping operations, there is an overriding finding. In sharp contrast to extended war situations such as Vietnam, support troops in peacekeeping operations envy combat troops. Morale in Kosovo was much higher in those units whose duties took them off the main compound, Camp Bondsteel, or, in local GI terms, 'outside the wire.' Soldiers in combat units had duties involving patrols, checkpoints and related missions. The only major complaint of these soldiers was that they dis-



Sgt. Daniel Ledesman of the 161st Target Acquisition Battery of the Kansas National Guard, works on the Fire Finder Radar System in April 1996. Ledesman is a member of an eight-soldier team that monitors the system at the International Airport of Sarajevo, Bosnia, and gathers information about weapons fire. The Fire Finder Radar System pinpoints the origin of any fire as well as when and where the round will land. *DOD*

proportionately pulled stationary guard duty when back in camp."

At the very top in morale in both Kosovo and Bosnia, even higher than that of the combat soldiers, were those assigned to civil affairs, psychological operations, intelligence and military police, the personnel most likely to get out of the compound. Moskos further speculated that the "unit cohesion developed in reserve components in operations such as in Kosovo and Bosnia may be the best preparation for homeland defense against terrorist attacks."

In his survey of 350 soldiers in Kosovo in September 2000, 42 percent reported that their mission in Kosovo would make them more prepared for future combat experience. Thirty-four percent thought it would make no difference, and only 14 percent said it would make them less prepared. Ten percent had no opinion.

Despite the Kosovo soldiers' assertions, a good number of military thinkers question whether peacekeeping troops lose combat readiness. A lot of that seems to revolve around the question of training beforehand and retraining afterward. At least one unit, the Third Infantry Division based at Fort Stewart, Ga., was, during Winter 2001, downgraded by the Army to one of its second-lowest

ratings for wartime readiness, citing a lack of training and personnel caused by peacekeeping work in the Balkans. But most military officers say such problems are caused more by insufficient training beforehand, by not enough maneuvers during the mission and by irregular retraining afterwards than by the peacekeeping itself.

The larger question, both for the United States and for the United Nations itself, is "What next?"

At least we're seeing the beginning of some serious questioning about this mode of mission and mandate which has caused so much suffering and grief in the past decade.

In September 2000, for instance, I traveled again to the United Nations in New York to plumb their thinking. Fred Eckard, the organization's spokesman, told me, "When the Cold War ended, and the 'New World Order' and the United Nations were to be the new centers of power, the United Nations was just not suited for that. I knew we were going to crash, and we did. And when the United States lost its stomach for multilateral fixes, we collapsed, caved and came down to earth."

The organizational wisdom then was based mostly upon what the United Nations now

would not do rather than what it would do. There will be no standing army; there won't be peacekeepers put into the middle of a war as in Bosnia; they won't act without the total authority and a crystal-clear mandate from member states, in particular without the positive response of the Security Council. And yet, nothing really changed as new contingents were deployed in 2001 to the Congo under the same old rules.

The most hopeful development lay in, what some called, giving the power in local crises to "regional armies" or, as *Newsweek* called them, "regio-cops."

*Newsweek's* diplomatic correspondent Michael Hirsh called for a "hybrid system of regio-cops, dependent on both U.N. legitimization and local muscle."

Indeed, the peacekeeping crises which were most promising were those where regional powers took over command of U.N. deployments or responsibility for the outcome, like the Australians in East Timor and, although not formally, the Brits in Sierra Leone.

Meanwhile, President George W. Bush, who came into office skeptical of peacekeeping and threatening to pull American troops out of Kosovo, has made no real gesture to change the dependence on some multilateral solutions to world crisis points. The simple fact was that the vast majority of the peacekeeping troops now deployed around the world were Third World troops whose governments were being paid well for their presence in the "failed countries" of the world. The harsh truth was that the advanced industrialized countries just didn't want to fight anymore.

Advanced countries need to carefully think through the whole peacekeeping experiment and experience to see where it has worked and where it has failed and, finally, to begin again with the doctor's oath: "First, do no harm." □

*Georgie Anne Geyer is a syndicated columnist with Universal Press Syndicate. She is a frequent contributor to this magazine.*

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## How to use your National Reunion Registry\*

The National Reunion Registry handles all reunion information services for *The American Legion Magazine*. NRR, a division of Military Information Enterprises, Inc., is a private organization that provides information about reunions, helps veterans locate old buddies and offers other special benefits to veterans and their families.

NRR maintains contact information on thousands of reunions and provides this information free of charge to veterans.

There are several ways to register reunions or check reunion listings with the National Reunion Registry. Please contact the organization directly by writing to NRR/Reunions, PO Box 17118, Spartanburg, SC 29301, by faxing (864) 595-0813 or via e-mail at [information@militaryUSA.com](mailto:information@militaryUSA.com). Due to the large number of reunions, NRR cannot accept phone requests for reunion information.

To register a reunion, you should include the complete name of the organization and branch of service with your request. The request should

also include the reunion dates and city, along with a contact name and telephone number. Please also include a size estimate of the group.

Using the Internet is the quickest, most accurate way to access the reunion registry. You may check to see if your buddies are planning a reunion by visiting NRR's Web site at [www.MilitaryUSA.com](http://www.MilitaryUSA.com). To promote the best accuracy and fastest process when listing your reunion, complete the Reunion Registration Form available on the Web site.

## Locating a Buddy

[MilitaryUSA.com](http://MilitaryUSA.com) offers many services for veterans, including tips and techniques for locating current or former military members. *How To Locate Anyone Who Is or Has Been in the Military: Armed Forces Locator Guide* is a practical guide to help people locate service members. The publication can be purchased by contacting **MIE Publishing, P.O. Box 17118, Spartanburg, SC 29301 or by faxing (864) 595-0813.**

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**504th AAA Gun Bn**, Akron, OH, 10/25-28, Robert Janssens, (330) 336-5166, **516th Sig Co**, Asheboro, NC, 10/5-7, Dow Duncan, (515) 432-5567, [blen@spec.net](mailto:blen@spec.net); **517th FA Bn**, Orlando, FL, 10/7-11, Chuck Underwood, (515) 987-5576, [chunder@attglobal.net](mailto:chunder@attglobal.net); **518th Sig Co**, Washington, 10/26-28, Bob Doen, (816) 857-2557, [bbob@verizon.net](mailto:bbob@verizon.net); **527th Personnel Serv Co**, New Orleans, 10/11-14, Richard Furman, (321) 356-4976, [rfarman@bigplanet.com](mailto:rfarman@bigplanet.com); **530th FA Bn**, Branson, MO, 11/1-5, Robert Janssens, (805) 589-1093, [closure@prodigy.net](mailto:closure@prodigy.net); **551st AAA Bn WWII**, Williamsburg, VA, 10/12-14, Benhamin Knauf, (716) 334-5050; **623rd FA Bn**, Korea, Albuquerque, NM, 10/13-17, N. Vandehave, (973) 538-1794; **627th Armp Inf Bn**, Ft. Meade, (804) 433-8411; **739d Sig Bn**, Ft. Bragg, NC, 10/13-17, John True, (740) 773-1225; **829th Sig Serv Bn C Co**, San Diego, 10/18-22, Charles Dorfman, (800) 484-8156, [chukar@earthlink.net](mailto:chukar@earthlink.net); **931st Sig Bn Avn**, Rapid City, SD, October, Troy Marshall, (407) 277-1864, [army931sb@juno.com](mailto:army931sb@juno.com); **945th FA Bn**, Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/18-21, George Buck, (515) 255-4629; **1884th Eng Avn Bn**, Savannah, GA, 10/21-26, James Pallaza, (352) 854-9628, [jimber@mfni.net](mailto:jimber@mfni.net)

**2923rd Sig Serv Bn A Co**, 3195th, **6662nd Sig Serv Cos**, San Diego, 10/18-22, Charles Dorfman, (800) 484-8156, [chukar@earthlink.net](mailto:chukar@earthlink.net); **Army Counterintelligence Corps Vets**, Bushkill, PA, 10/12-14, Maura Dougherty, (800) 484-8156, [chukar@earthlink.net](mailto:chukar@earthlink.net); **Army Commemoration Reunion**, Alexandria, VA, 10/12-15, Thor Mealing, (404) 231-3402, [encos@earthlink.net](mailto:encos@earthlink.net); **ROT C**, Miami, Univ., Miami, 11/2-3, B. Jennewein, (613) 681-7844, [bdg96@asid.com](mailto:bdg96@asid.com); **Sig Serv Assn**, San Diego, 10/18-22, Charles Dorfman, (800) 484-8156, [chukar@earthlink.net](mailto:chukar@earthlink.net)

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## JOINT

**33rd Inf Rgt Cbt Team**, Virginia Beach, VA, 10/3-7, Don Shim, (973) 423-4954, dshin101@home.com; **Greenland Patrol WWII**, Savannah, GA, 10/7-11, Richard Bissette, (911) 426-4806, jstam8852@apl.com; **Marines/Navy Paratroopers WWII**, Las Vegas, 10/23-26, Dave Severance, (858) 459-0607; **Natl Chief Petty Officers**, Corpus Christi, TX, 10/10-14, William Williams, (603) 537-4899; **Natl Edt Assn**, Las Vegas, 10/1-3, Bud Englehardt, (413) 569-5040, moss@buttercup.net; **Pearl Harbor Survivors**, Honolulu, 12/3-8, Bill Eckel, (903) 683-4507; **USS Arizona**, BB 39, Hawaii, 12/3-10, Joe Campbell, (520) 529-7494, rucmpb@aol.com; **USS Minneapolis**, CA 36, Orlando, FL, 10/2-7, Robert Murphy, (516) 770-3037, grassbank@aol.com

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**1st Mar 2nd Bn Echo Co**, Orlando, FL, 11/11, Steve Krupa, (717) 447-5843, skrupa@comcast.net; **2nd Mar Div 10th Mar 4th Bn**, Monroe, LA, 10/11-14, Robert Faifa, (314) 962-1775; **3rd Mar Div 3rd Regt 3rd Bn Okinawa**, San Diego, 10/17-21, Roger Hatzczar, (619) 524-7424, rhatz@prodigy.net; **8th Del AAA Bn**, St. Louis, 10/11-15, James Powers, (781) 449-4035; **9th Del 9th AAA Bn**, New London, CT, 10/10-14, Bill Sorenson, (203) 378-0350; **22nd Mar Assn**, Lancaster, PA, 10/8-12, Harold Walters, (330) 264-5451, shortround@lessemnet.net; **B-1-1**, **Carrie 1950-1953**, Las Vegas, 10/24-28, Tom Prendergast, (561) 283-6813; **Kilo Co 3/7 Vietnam Assn**, Tucson, AZ, 10/18-21, Harry Smith, (602) 247-1146, smithy@kilo37.com; **Korean War Recon Mar**, San Antonio, 10/10-13, Morris Estess, (210)

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104-7, Gayle Teachout, (425) 355-2132; **USA Bulleson, APAs**, 67, Branson, MO, 10/14-16, John Gray, (630) 584-6726; **USA Cubz, CIV**, 20, Charleston, SC, 10/31-1/14, Ron Davis, (860) 536-1835; **USA Cobras**, CIV 55, Bedford, MA, 10/30-11/2, Milton Rowe, (717) 761-8526; **USA Castor, AKS**, Las Vegas, 10/14, Walt Whittemore, (702) 431-1290; **Castorion@aol.com**; **USA Cubz, APAs**, 6, Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/28-31, Harold Bond, (910) 573-2777; **USA Chandeleur**, Alt 10, Norfolk, VA, 10/20-23, Gordon Humphreys, (423) 928-4586; **USA Char, AKAs** 58/AE 31, San Diego, 10/10-15, Jim Harper, (972) 359-9147, [into@uschara.com](mailto:into@uschara.com); **USA Chickasaw, ATB**, 83, San Diego, 10/9-14, Troy Clark, (409) 385-2534; **USA Chilton, APA/LPA** 38, 2010-14, Edward Ritterhoff, (616) 358-3624, [hm@usa.com](mailto:hm@usa.com); **USA Chiva**, SS 341, Myrtle Beach, SC, 10/25-28, Stan Poland, (910) 845-3080, [bistar@earthlink.com](mailto:bistar@earthlink.com).

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